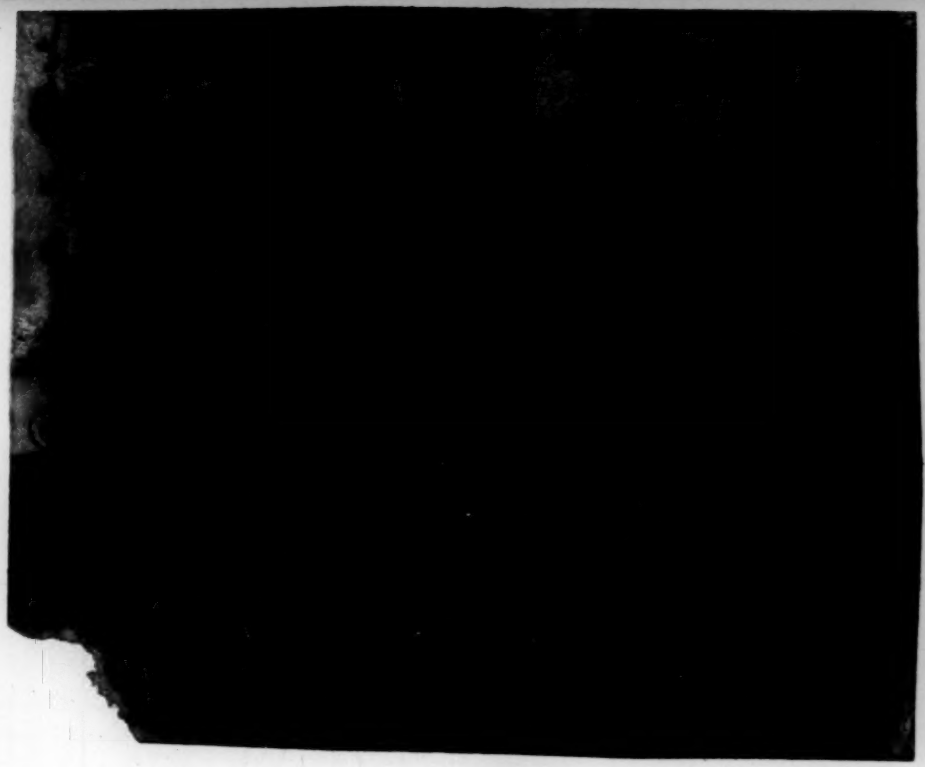

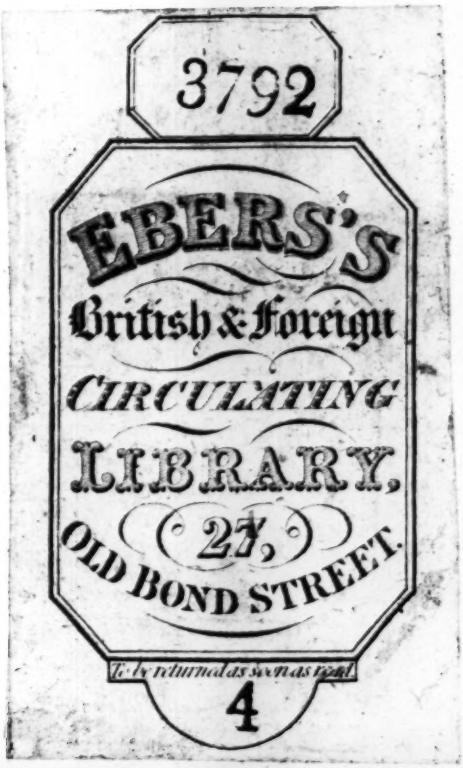
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THE

RIVAL MOTHERS.

VOL. IV.

4971

THE

RIVAL MOTHERS,

OR

CALUMNY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

MADAME DE GENLIS.

Virtue and Patience have at length unravell'd
The knots which Fortune tied.

DRYDEN.

Depuis que je suis né, j'ai vu la calomnie
Exhaler les venins de sa bouche impunie.

VOLTAIRE's *Tancrède.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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1800.

THE

RIVAL MOTHERS.

LETTER I.

From LÉOCADIE *to the* MARCHIONESS.

June 22.

AH! my dear mamma! how painful has it been to me, for theſe five days, to write to you, without entruſting to you the moſt intereſting event of my life!.... But read the copy of the letter which I ſend you, and you will ſee that it was your Léocadie's duty to be ſilent, even towards you. At laſt I am permitted to ſpeak,

and I will relate to you, at great length, all that has happened to me.

On Monday, the 16th, I got up as uſual at ſix o'clock; I put ſome cherries and ſome bread into a baſket, and I went into the garden at the end of the large green, towards the wood on the bank of the river. Since your abſence, Mademoiſelle du Rocher allows me to go and breakfaſt there alone. I always carry thither your laſt two letters, which I read over again; and, in the courſe of half an hour, Mademoiſelle du Rocher or Jacinthe come for me in order that I may take a walk with Monſieur du Reſnel and Sylveſtre. I went then to this ſpot laſt Monday, as uſual. I ſat down on the bench. At the end of a few minutes, caſting my eyes on the river which was flowing at my feet, I perceived the prettieſt thing in the world; it was the moſt beautiful roſe I have ever ſeen, which was floating on the ſurface of the water; and,

carried away by the ſtream, was coming gently towards me. I broke off a long branch of hazel, and, reaching it into the river, I attracted the roſe, which had its ſtalk and its leaves; I drew it to the ſhore, and picked it up. How great was my ſurpriſe to ſee, on the thick ſtem, a ſmall bit of vellum, faſtened with a piece of ſilk, and on which were written theſe words: "*To Léocadie!*" I examined the flower, which was of a beauty quite new to me: it was a moſs-roſe. I then recollected that, three or four months ago, having heard of this ſpecies of roſe, with which we are not acquainted here, I had expreſſed a wiſh to have ſome, and that Monſieur du Reſnel had undertaken to procure me a few, and had even written to Paris for that purpoſe. Therefore I did not doubt that this flattering piece of gallantry came from him. I am ſo accuſtomed to receive ſuch proofs of his kindneſs and friendſhip, that this idea was very natural. I could

not clear up the matter that day, becauſe Monſieur du Reſnel had ſet out very early in the morning on buſineſs, that is, to oblige ſome one, (for this is his ſole occupation,) and was not to return till very late at night. I was gone to bed when he arrived; but my adventure was related to him; and he proteſted that he had no concern in the buſineſs of the *floating roſe*. When he came the next day to repeat to me the ſame thing, I had another idea; in this charming gift I recognized maternal affection; I thought of you, dear mamma; this was not gueſſing without being miſtaken. Monſieur du Reſnel followed me to my ſolitary walk; ſcarcely were we ſeated on the bench, when we perceived at a diſtance a *floating roſe* which the ſtream was bringing towards us. This brilliant roſe was ſtill more blown, freſher and more beautiful than that of the preceding day. Monſieur du Reſnel, on ſeeing it, was moved, and he exclaimed: "*Ah!*

"*'tis*

"*'tis ſhe! I know her; 'tis Pauline!*" He might very well be miſtaken; every thing that is ingenious and affecting reſembles you.

Monſieur du Reſnel, with his cane, reached the roſe; he put me greatly out of patience, becauſe he would not give it to me; he was a quarter of an hour examining it, and ſmelling it; he ſaid that, on that day, it was not for me; but that it was intended for him, and at leaſt belonged to him by *right of conqueſt*. In ſhort, after having well tormented me, he gave it me, and I went and put it with the former, in my handſomeſt china vaſe, in the window of my cabinet.

At dinner, we were told that two ſtrange ladies, who were going to Nevers, had been forced to ſtop at Paray, becauſe one of them had had a violent attack of the colic. It was added, that they lodged at Boſſuet's, and that ſhe, who was not ill, had taken a walk in the environs, and

had been ſeen in the large corn-fields facing the caſtle. I had a great mind to invite theſe two female ſtrangers to the houſe. Mademoiſelle du Rocher made the reflection, that unknown women might be perſons of improper character, and that ſince they appeared rich, and were in a paſſable inn, we might diſpenſe with inviting them to come and reſide at the caſtle. Monſieur du Reſnel was of this opinion; ſo I contented myſelf with ſending Jacinthe to Paray, charging her to offer theſe ſtrangers every thing that I ſuppoſed they might have occaſion for in a village. Jacinthe ſaw only their maid, who thanked her in the name of her miſtreſſes, but without accepting any thing. Jacinthe told us that theſe two ſtrangers were ſhop-keepers' wives of the *Rue St. Honoré* in Paris, who were travelling for the concerns of their trade. We thought no more of them.

On

On the 18th I repaired at ſix o'clock to the bank of the river. I did not perceive a floating roſe; but I ſaw on the other ſhore a man unknown, of a certain age, well dreſſed, and of a handſome perſon, coming out of the mill. He advanced to the bank of the river, caſt off the boat that is always there, got into it, took the oars, and began rowing towards me. I was getting up in order to go away, when this man called me by my name, at the ſame time ſhewing me a beautiful ſprig of *moſs-roſes*, which he had juſt taken out of a baſket. His boat advancing rapidly, he was quite cloſe to me; the ſweetneſs of his countenance, his reſpectful behaviour; and, above all, the moſs-roſe which he held in his hand, diſpelled my fears.... I no longer felt any thing but aſtoniſhment and emotion. He ſtopped oppoſite to me, and preſented me with the ſprig of roſes. ..." Was I not miſtaken," ſaid I to him; " are theſe roſes ſent me by my mother?"

—"Yes," anſwered he; "*but by her "who brought you into the world!*"—At theſe words I fell back on the ſeat, and my tears flowed. "Mademoiſelle," reſumed the ſtranger, "your mother has "travelled near five hundred miles in "hopes of ſeeing you for a moment; it is "ſhe who, under a fictitious name, is at "Paray."—"Great God!" exclaimed I, "is it ſhe who is ill?"—"No, Made-"moiſelle," rejoined the ſtranger, "it "is her female companion who keeps "her bed, and her illneſs is no more than "a feint, in order to have a pretext for "ſtopping a few days in this neighbour-"hood. I recommend to you, Made-"moiſelle, in the name of your mother, "the ſtricteſt ſecrecy in regard to all this; "the ſmalleſt indiſcretion on your part "might ruin a mother who lives only for "you. Therefore be prudent and obedi-"ent, and read this letter, which will "inform you of every thing." On ſay-

ing

ing this, he delivered me the letter from my mother, and immediately left me, regained the oppoſite ſhore, jumped out of the boat, and diſappeared. Tranſported, and quite beſide myſelf, I durſt not read the precious letter, which I preſſed to my heart. I was afraid of being ſurpriſed by Monſieur du Reſnel, or by ſome other perſon. I haſtened to return to the caſtle, and I went and ſhut myſelf up in my cabinet. I had the good fortune to enter it without being ſeen, which enſured to me a long hour's tranquillity, becauſe I was certain that I ſhould firſt be ſought for in the wood and in the orchard.

You may imagine, my dear mamma, all that I felt in reading ſo affecting a letter, and in thinking that my mother was ſo near me! .... I no longer reflected on any thing but the means that I ſhould employ in order to execute her commands, and to be, at the hour preſcribed, at the place of appointment on which ſhe had

fixed. This would have been a thing impoſſible, had not Mademoiſelle du Rocher had the rheumatiſm, which keeps her ſtill in bed. Jacinthe's vigilance is much leſs ſtrict. I was very ſure that ſhe would neither hinder me from getting up at an earlier hour, nor from going to take a walk alone. I was all this day ſo abſent in mind that every one was aſtoniſhed; I knew neither what I ſaid nor what I did; I did not attend; I did not hear; I had but one thought; I ſaw nothing but Paray or *the hollow tree* in the little wood! ..... After dinner, I diſpenſed with going to take a walk with Monſieur du Reſnel and Sylveſtre; I ſtaid at home, and I propoſed to Jacinthe to go with me to Paray, unknown to Mademoiſelle du Rocher. To this ſhe willingly conſented. I put into my pockets two bottles, the one of orgeat, the other of good Malaga wine. I filled a tolerably large baſket with beautiful cherries, vege-

vegetables, paſtry and confectionary; and, thus loaded, we ſet out for Paray. I ſaid to Jacinthe that theſe ſick female ſtrangers moved my compaſſion, and that I wiſhed to take them all thoſe things. Jacinthe deſired to have charge of the baſket; but I would not have given it up for any thing in the world, ſo much pleaſure did I feel in carrying it. I arrived at Paray very much fatigued; I ſeated myſelf on the wooden bench that faces Bouſſet's houſe; Oh! how I was affected on looking at this inn!.... I durſt not enter it; I gave all my proviſions to Jacinthe, and I remained in the ſtreet. But, at the expiration of a few minutes, I ſaw the unknown man, who had ſpoken to me in the morning. He begged me to come into the houſe. On this propoſal, I trembled to ſuch a degree that I could not ſtand; he gave me his arm, and led me into a parlour on the ground floor. As I looked about on all

ſides, he ſmiled. "You will not ſee her," ſaid he to me; "but having heard that "you yourſelf had carried the bottles and "the baſket, ſhe ſuppoſes that you muſt "be warm, and ſhe wiſhes that you would "drink the firſt glaſs out of the bottle of "wine which you have brought her." I obeyed; and, as I was drinking, I heard the noiſe of feet over head, which made me ſtart. "Yes; 'tis ſhe indeed," ſaid the unknown man to me; "we are under "her room, and, at this moment, ſhe is "quite alone." At theſe words I held my breath, in order to hear better this noiſe, become ſo intereſting to me! In the courſe of a quarter of an hour Jacinthe came back; ſhe told me that ſhe had not ſeen the ladies, but had ſpoken only to the maid. Sighing, I quitted the inn where I left a mother ſo worthy of being loved, without having enjoyed the happineſs of embracing her, or even of getting a glimpſe of her!.... Having returned to the caſtle,

caſtle, the whole evening appeared to me dreadfully tedious; and, in order to ſhorten it, I went to bed at half paſt nine o'clock. I did not feel any inclination to ſleep till about two in the morning; but the fear of waking too late prevented me from giving way to my drowſineſs. I cloſed not my eyes for a minute, and I roſe at four o'clock. I dreſſed myſelf quietly and in haſte; and I ſlipped out without waking Jacinthe. I was very ſure that ſhe would not get up till ſix o'clock; ſo I went, without any uneaſineſs, into the wood. I met Mathurin before I reached it; I told him that I was going into the meadow, and he went into the lower court; a moment after, I met Véronique, who was aſtoniſhed at ſeeing me ſo early in the morning. I was under the neceſſity of ſtopping for a few minutes, and, that I might not meet with any one elſe, I took the longeſt road, which the ſervants never

paſs

paſs at this hour. All this delayed me; but I was in the wood at forty-nine minutes paſt four; and, in leſs than ſix minutes, I found myſelf near my tree!.... Not knowing whether my mother was already arrived, I followed her orders; I went towards the ſeat, and there I ſtopped, leaning againſt the tree; I had ſuch a palpitation of the heart that it was out of my power to utter a ſingle word; beſides, I ſhould have been afraid of committing an indiſcretion by ſpeaking..... On the other hand, it ſeemed to me that I ought to expreſs my affection and gratitude. This indeciſion blended a ſort of painful fear to the joy and the extreme emotion which I experienced! I liſtened with as much attention as agitation, when I diſtinctly heard a ſigh. I fell on my knees; I ſtretched out my arms in order to embrace this dear and ſacred tree: a flood of tears overflowed my face: "O! "my mother!" exclaimed I, "my whole

"ſoul

" ſoul is attached to this bark!" .... To theſe words my mother anſwered only by ſobs and groans. What I then felt is inexpreſſible; I could not bear ſo violent an emotion, I gave a painful ſhriek; my arms dropped from the favourite tree which I was thus preſſing to my boſom; my eyes cloſed, and I fainted. The moſt tender attentions ſoon reſtored to me the uſe of my ſenſes..... What was my rapture, on recovering, to find myſelf on the turf-ſeat in the arms of my mother!.... But ſhe was covered with a thick veil which entirely concealed her face and her ſhape.... Ah! at that moment what could I wiſh for! She was preſſing me in her arms.... I was holding, I was kiſſing both her hands!... She took one of mine, which ſhe carried to her throbbing heart, ſaying to me in a ſobbing, but delightful, voice: " *For thee; ſolely for thee!*" She took a ring from her finger, put it on mine, leant her face againſt my boſom,

placed

placed me gently on the ſeat, moaning at the ſame time, got up, and ſtepped a few paces!.... Not daring to ſtop her or follow her, I felt my heart torn; I proſtrated myſelf, holding out my arms to her.... She turned back, ſtopped, and, all of a ſudden, fell on her knees; and, ſtretching out her arms towards heaven, ſhe exclaimed: "*O! my God! for her... for "her!*" She then haſtily went away.... It ſeemed to me that ſhe carried away with her my ſoul, my ſtrength, and my life! As ſhe increaſed her diſtance from me, I felt myſelf grow faint. She diſappeared; and I remained lying on the moſs, with my head reclined on the turf-ſeat. I looked at my tree with grief; ſhe was no longer there!.... I continued in this ſituation till half paſt ſeven o'clock, when I heard the voice of Jacinthe, who was calling me. I wiped away my tears; I put on a hat, the rim of which I let down, and I then joined Jacinthe. I told her that I had been taking

taking a long walk, and was going to return home, and I went and ſhut myſelf up in my cabinet. My firſt care was to examine my ring; it is gold enamelled in green, with theſe words traced in golden letters: "*Maternal love.*" In the inſide of the ring are written theſe two names, which appear to me to make but one: "*Pauline and Roſalba.*" Thus it is that my mother has united two ſentiments which I cannot ſeparate, and which fill my heart without dividing it, ſo much are they equal and ſimilar.

I know then that my mother's name is *Roſalba*, a name which will, in future, be ſo dear and ſo revered. .... It is pleaſing to me to be able at laſt to give her a name; it is knowing her a little more.

After dinner, I ſlipped away alone in order to go and ſee my tree again; what was my aſtoniſhment when wiſhing to contemplate the place where my mother had been ſeated, I found there a capital moſs roſe-

roſe-tree in an elegant alabaſter vaſe! I cauſed it to be carried into my cabinet; I ſhall never water it without ſhedding tears of the moſt tender gratitude!....

At five o'clock in the afternoon, Boſſuet came to the caſtle, and ſaid that the two ſtrange ladies had ſet off at nine in the morning, and had charged him to bring me a baſket from them, in return for the refreſhments which I had ſent them. This charming baſket is perfumed; it is filled with the moſt beautiful artificial flowers, among which is a noſegay and a garland of *moſs-roſes*. This preſent and the alabaſter vaſe have occaſioned a great deal of ſurprize in the houſe. I have thrown no light on the matter, wiſhing to inform you, mamma, before I gave any anſwer. You will preſcribe to me what I muſt ſay; I wait for your orders on this ſubject.

The departure of my mother made me ſhed tears! Alas! perhaps, I ſhall never ſet eyes on her again!.... this idea is frightful!

frightful! .... I have been ſeveral times to Paray, in order to go into the room in which ſhe ſlept. I have bought an old arm-chair covered with tapeſtry in which ſhe ſat. I ſhall not venture to have it carried into my chamber till you, dear mamma, have written me word that there would be no impropriety in this. Boſſuet thinks that I mean to give this arm-chair to one of our poor women; and, indeed, I will give one of the ſame kind to Marie-Jeanne. But I ſhall be happy to have this chair in my own apartment! ....

I flatter myſelf, dear mamma, that you will ſhew this letter to my good grandmamma and to my papa, who, I dare believe, will take an intereſt in my happineſs; for it is a very great one to me to no longer be able to doubt of the exiſtence and affection of my mother. At laſt ſhe has appeared! the *anonymous* preſents and letters certainly come from her; it is no longer poſſible to ſuppoſe that all theſe things

things are *ſtratagems!* .... The arms, in which I found myſelf, were maternal arms: Ah! it was a maternal heart that I felt beat under my hand! .... and the feelings which I experienced would alone be certain proofs. Hence, then, no more doubts, no more means of calumniating innocence, virtue, generoſity, in ſhort, my beneſactreſs, my ſecond mother! This idea makes me happy. Adieu, my dear mamma; when will you return? Oh! how long is this abſence! Ah! come back, you who alone can reſtore to me the mother whom I regret! ... Come back, dear and affectionate mother; conſider that your child, your pupil, your Léocadie is wiſhing for you every moment, is calling for you, and cannot live without you.

The man, who ſpoke to me in the boat and at Boſſuet's, is a *valet-de-chambre* belonging to my mother.

LETTER II.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer.*

Dijon, June 28.

MY mother is as well as we can reaſonably wiſh; ſhe will quit her bed to-morrow; what joy ſhall I experience in ſeeing her ſitting up and dreſſed! What gratitude I owe to God, who has preſerved for me the moſt valuable of his favours, an affectionate and virtuous mother!

I beg you, my dear child, to go to the Rector's, in order to thank him again for all the proofs of friendſhip which he has given us on this occaſion. Tell him that I ſtill recommend my mother to his prayers, I have ſo much faith in them! .... You will give him, for our church, a veil

veil, for a calice which I ſend you, and which I myſelf have embroidered ſince I have been here. Beſides this I would wiſh to take under my care one poor woman more; I would wiſh her to be ſixty-two years old, the age of my mother. As there will be no poor found unprovided for at Erneville, this reſearch muſt be made in the neighbouring towns or eſtates; it would be uſeleſs near Madame de Vordac's or at Gilly; and, beſides, if ſome unfortunate woman were there to be met with by chance, I would not ſend for her to Erneville; for I will not rob my friends; I ſhould content myſelf with apprizing them of the circumſtance. Therefore cauſe inquiry to be made at Bourbon, at Luzi, at L****, at P***, &c. I ſhall lodge this poor woman, not in the village, but in the caſtle; I ſhall eſtabliſh her in the new pavilion built over the cellars, and the ſituation of which is very healthy; I intend for her the yellow room on the ground

ground-floor, with the cabinet in which I will make Véronique ſleep; ſhe ſhall attend on her. It is unneceſſary to mention that, in looking out for this woman, a preference muſt be given to her who has the reputation of being the moſt pious, and conſequently the moſt reſpectable. Give orders immediately for a complete ſet of neceſſaries to be made for a woman of that age; I deſire that the linen may be infinitely leſs coarſe than that of our other poor people, eſpecially for the ſhifts and ſheets. Do not forget to order ſome cotton ſtockings to be purchaſed. Monſieur D***, at Bourbon, will furniſh the money neceſſary, if Mademoiſelle du Rocher has not enough.

My mother and Albert have read your laſt letter, my dear child; and their opinion is, that you muſt by no means relate theſe romantic details, which our enemies would not fail to turn into ridicule. Therefore do not ſpeak of them. I cannot

not but applaud the ſenſibility which you ſhew for your mother. This ſentiment, which is ſo natural, does you honour, and ſuch charming attentions are very worthy of inſpiring it.

As for me, my child, I am only alive to feeling; I have hitherto learned only to love you. What is *affecting* may, indeed, reſemble me, but not what is *ingenious*. My mind has had no occaſion to exerciſe itſelf in this way; it is, above all, the neceſſity of employing myſtery that renders people ingenious, and I have never been obliged to conceal any thing.

I will naturally own to you that I do not approve of your mother's prevailing on you to deceive the perſons who have a lawful authority over you, and I grieve at not ſeeing in you the ſmalleſt regret for having told ſo many fibs to Mademoiſelle du Rocher and to Jacinthe. In ſhort, this has ſuggeſted to me a very painful idea; it is, that had I been at Erneville I

ſhould

ſhould have been a reſtraint on you, and you would have deceived me! ....

Ah! my child! diſpoſe of your heart; give yourſelf up entirely to an affection the exceſs of which even is virtuous; but preſerve the principles which I have inſtilled into you! ....

I intend to ſet out from this place on the 15th of next month, if my mother is then, as I hope ſhe will be, perfectly recovered.

Adieu, my daughter, adieu, child of my choice and of my heart! Ah! ... do not believe that any one breathing can ever love you as much as I do! .... I readily conſent not to have the preference; I readily conſent that your affection ſhould *be equally divided*; but never confound mine with another; compare not my feelings; this is all that I aſk of you.

LETTER III.

From the ſame to the BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Dijon, July 6.

No, my dear friend; the unexpected appearance of the *veiled mother* has made no more impreſſion on Albert than all the reſt. He certainly does not admit it; but I ſee that he is thoroughly perſuaded that all this ſcene was played by a good actreſs, well paid for that purpoſe. He has poſitively forbid me to relate this adventure to any others than my *intimate friends:* this was excepting only yourſelf and Monſieur du Reſnel; and indeed he deſired me to enjoin you the moſt profound

found ſecrecy. However, I think with him that indifferent perſons, and much more our enemies, would conſider this account as nothing but a fable or a farce. Therefore it will be no puniſhment to me to preſerve ſilence on the ſubject.

I have made up my mind reſpecting Albert's incredulity; but how many anxieties this unknown mother occaſions me! She will, you will ſee, deprive me of all Léocadie's confidence. And what is filial * affection without confidence? on this point I have anſwered Léocadie with

* Under the idea that the term *filial*, applied to the affection of a daughter for her parent, may perhaps, by ſome, be deemed improper, we have, in many places, avoided it; but we flatter ourſelves that the authority of SHAKESPEARE will juſtify us in the occaſional uſe of it, the word being, in that ſenſe, certainly much wanted in our language. The expreſſion, to which we allude, is to be met with in the tragedy of *King Lear*, Act III. Scene IV.— *Tranſlator's Note.*

" ——— Filial ingratitude!
" Is it not as this mouth ſhould tear this hand,
" For lifting food to 't?"—

ſeverity, and even with a little peeviſhneſs. I cannot conceal what I experience; I am leſs amiable towards her; and, above all, leſs attentive; I dare not contend in attentions with her mother; ſuch a conteſt could never be to my advantage. Her mother's affection has for her all the moſt faſcinating charms of love; myſtery, intrigue, ingenious aſſiduities, and the engaging allurement of curioſity; and this romance is the more affecting as it is quite new, as it is quite out of the common line, as no remorſe, no ſcruple adulturates the ſweetneſs of it, as it occupies and inflames the imagination without bewildering it, as its purity adds a delicious charm to its intereſt, and as, in filling the heart, it ſatisfies the conſcience, by blending the gentle movements of an impaſſioned affection with the ſentiment of duty and the enthuſiaſm of virtue.

What can I oppoſe to all that? Fifteen years' attentions and leſſons: but we ſee ſo many good mothers, ſo many good governeſſes,

verneſſes, and there exiſts only one ſingle *anonymous mother*, who knows how to add to maternal affection all the gallantry and graces, and all the delicate, ingenious, and romantic aſſiduities of love. All this proves that the anonymous mother has ſome method of being informed of whatever paſſes or is ſaid at Erneville; but for that, how would ſhe have known that Léocadie wiſhed for ſome moſs-roſes? I ſtill think that it is Madame d'Olbreuſe who knows her and gives her information, and who, herſelf, learns all theſe little details from my letters and from St. Méran.

Léocadie, on carrying to the rector the veil I ſent for the calice, made the ſacrifice of the *bouquet* of artificial flowers which ſhe had from her mother; ſhe has given it to our church, and placed it in the chapel of *Saint Roſe*, her mother's patroneſs *. I know that ſhe has the pro-

* A patron or patroneſs, in this ſenſe, means the ſaint's name which a perſon receives in baptiſm.—*Tranſlator.*

ject of ornamenting this chapel in a particular manner. With this intention, ſhe has begun the embroidery of an altar cloth. She has already given ſeveral pretty vaſes from her cabinet; and ſhe has begged Sauval to paint her a ſmall picture which ſhe is to copy ..... What devotion for *Saint Roſe!* ... And ſhe has never thought of *Saint Pauline!*

Adieu, my friend; I ſhall ſtill ſet out on the 15th; you may depend on it. We ſhall go to Moulins, where ſome buſineſs will detain Albert for ſix or ſeven days at leaſt. Monſieur du Reſnel is ſo good as to bring thither Léocadie and Mademoiſelle du Rocher. It is decided that, from Moulins, we ſhall viſit the grottoes of Arcy which I have never ſeen. Oh! if you could be of this party! The Baron is in good health at preſent; if he were not in pain then, do you think that he would grant this permiſſion? I dare not hope it; but I will have the boldneſs to aſk of him this favour, which would make our little excurſion ſo perfectly agreeable.

LETTER IV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Moulins, July 20.

I AM now, my dear friend, conſoled that it was not in your power to come hither with Monſieur du Reſnel and Léocadie, becauſe you would have been witneſs to a ſcene that would have made you ſuffer not a little. We arrived here on the evening of the ſixth, and ſent viſiting cards to the intendant, who invited us all to ſupper the next day. We went: fortunately, Albert could not go with us on account of his buſineſs. We arrived at the intendant's houſe without having yet ſeen any one; for we had not ſtirred out of our

inn, and I had been at home to no perſon all day. Léocadie, whom I was proud to exhibit, for the firſt time, in a large company, was very much dreſſed, and her beauty was enchanting. We entered a drawing-room exceſſively lighted and full of company. Monſieur du Reſnel took me by the hand, and the firſt object that ſtruck our eyes was the Duke de Roſmond, who had arrived a few minutes before us, and had been only three days at Moulins! What a terrible ſight for Monſieur du Reſnel and me!.... The Duke made me a low bow with a grave and reſpectful air; I know not whether I returned it; my confuſion was ſo great that I neither recollect what I did at that moment, nor even what I thought. Monſieur du Reſnel was obliged to tell me that the intendant's lady, who is lame, and walks with much difficulty, was coming up to me. I ſaw nothing; at laſt I advanced towards the miſtreſs

miſtreſs of the houſe, who led Léocadie and me to the other end of the room, and made us ſit down beſide her. There were upwards of twenty women all ſeated, and about thirty men ſtanding up, forming a ſemi-circle oppoſite to us. My confuſion was a little diſſipated; but I felt an extreme inquietude for Léocadie. She had, indeed, remarked my emotion without at firſt divining the cauſe of it; afterwards, her looks were directed towards the Duke de Roſmond, who was very remarkable from his blue ribband, and even alſo from his perſon. Léocadie was beginning to be moved, when all at once ſhe heard the Duke's name mentioned, and ſhe knew at laſt that he whom ſhe believes to be her father was within ſix paces of her! .... She then turned pale; and a fan, which ſhe held, dropped from her hands. .... The Duke ſprang forward, picked up the fan, and preſented it to her. Léo-

cadie aroſe, ſtaggered, and fell back into her chair, ſaying: "*Ah! my God!*" .... Every eye was fixed on her..... Judge of the ſituation I was in! .... Luckily, at this moment, a lady entering the room, the miſtreſs of the houſe ſtood up; and there was a movement that called off the attention of the company, during which Léocadie recovered herſelf a little. Card parties were arranged; and, in the courſe of a quarter of an hour, the Duke diſappeared. I was much relieved on ſeeing him leave the room. I cannot expreſs to you all the ſentiments which his preſence made me experience. .... The ſight of him recalled to my mind the pleaſanteſt period of my life. I was ſo happy when I ſaw him for the firſt time! .... Notwithſtanding all that he has coſt me, I own to you I forgot all my reſentment on looking at him; the reſemblance to Léocadie is, in fact, ſtriking, inconceivable!

No;

..... No; I cannot hate that face! .... Beſides, ſince I really believe him to be Léocadie's father, I cannot avoid forgiving him in ſecret, or at leaſt I no longer have for him that decided averſion which I had at the beginning. Yet I felt a violent movement of anger when he picked up the fan. .... Audacious man! to dare to approach ſo near me. ... but he trembled on preſenting the fan; he was deeply affected.

This ſcene will be related every where, and certainly with the exaggeration and flouriſhes of malice. This adventure will renew and confirm all the calumnies againſt me. What a ſtrange and melancholy deſtiny is mine!

Without entering into any detail, I gave Albert an account of this meeting, which renders odious to me my ſtay at Moulins. I ſhall go no more to the intendant's. Fortunately, Albert, quite taken up with his affairs, does not go at all into com-

pany. Ah! had he been with us on the 16th, I believe that I ſhould have died with agitation and terror.

Count Jules, the Duke de Roſmond's ſon, is here with his regiment. He is ſaid to be, in every reſpect, an accompliſhed youth; the Biſhop of Autun, who educated him, ſpoke to me very highly of him. I am ſure that Léocadie would be glad to meet with him; but you may well ſuppoſe I take every neceſſary precaution that this may not happen.

I have aſked Léocadie all the queſtions imaginable relative to the events that have taken place in my abſence, and I am anxious to inform you that her mother is *very tall*, and that her hands are perfect in point of whiteneſs, ſhape and beauty. Madame d'Olbreuſe is little, and has not pretty hands. I hope that this will baniſh from your mind an unjuſt ſuſpicion which, in ſpite of me, you have ſo long harboured.

Adieu.

Adieu, my dear friend; we ſhall ſet out in three days for the grottoes of Arcy. Albert will not go on account of his affairs, which oblige him to make an excurſion for a week to Coſne, whence he will return to Erneville. I ſhall go to the grottoes with Monſieur du Reſnel, Mademoiſelle du Rocher, and Léocadie. Albert means to keep Maurice; and in ſix days I ſhall be near you, and entirely yours.

LETTER V.

From COUNT JULES DE ROSMOND *to the* COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

Moulins, July 30.

YES, my dear aunt, from you I ſhall never conceal any thing; you ſhall always know all the ſentiments of this heart which you formed, and which, with you, can never diſſemble. I have already acquainted you with the kind of life that I lead here; ſtudy and reading ſtill conſtitute my delight; therefore be well aſſured that I find time for every thing. I have, however, played a little prank that I muſt relate to you. In the firſt place it is neceſſary to tell you that there is, in this province, a young girl

girl named *Léocadie*, adopted by the Marchioneſs d'Erneville, and whom every one ſays is my ſiſter, that is, my father's daughter. What is very certain, is, that having, for the firſt time, ſeen my father at the intendant's, ſhe betrayed an emotion that ſtruck all the company, and my father alſo appeared much confuſed and exceedingly affected. This young girl's reputation for beauty, graces, and accompliſhments, joined to the idea that ſhe is my ſiſter, inſpired me with the moſt lively curioſity; but it was out of my power to meet with her. At laſt I diſcovered that ſhe was going with Madame d'Erneville to the grottoes of Arcy. I then aſked for leave of abſence, I obtained it, and ſet out before her; I arrived at the village neareſt to theſe grottoes, and there I took up my quarters. The next day I learnt that Léocadie was arrived; I was informed of the time that ſhe was to repair to the grottoes, and I flew thither; ſhe was already

in

in theſe caverns, when I entered them with a ſervant carrying two lighted flambeaus: I was very much ſurpriſed to ſee the grottoes full of a thick ſmoke, and to hear the cries of women..... This was occaſioned by the guides having carried only burning torches made of damp ſtraw; theſe wet whiſps had gone out, and the ladies experienced the moſt lively terror on finding themſelves in total darkneſs, in a place full of holes and precipices. I therefore appeared to them as a guardian angel, with my two flambeaus of pitch!..... In this ſort of danger, Madame d'Erneville thought only of her daughter, who, on her part, kept conſtantly repeating: "*Mamma! mamma!*"..... A man, called Monſieur du Reſnel, gave his arm to Léocadie, while a ſervant conducted Madame d'Erneville and an old maiden lady. This ſervant, falling into a hole, had ſprained his foot. Léocadie was diſtracted at ſeeing her mother without any other ſupport than the

the arm of the old lady, who was uttering piercing cries. Such was the ſtate of things when I entered the grotto. I immediately ran up to Madame d'Erneville; without conſulting her, I ſeized hold of her arm; the old lady did the ſame thing by me; we were at the farther end of the grotto, and as the ſmoke was really ſuffocating, we thought only of getting out of it. We walked before, to clear the way for Léocadie, whoſe features I had not yet been able to diſtinguiſh; for I ſcarcely got a glimpſe of Madame d'Erneville, who had hold of my arm..... She, on her part, thought little of examining me; ſhe was every minute looking back, in order to recommend to Monſieur du Reſnel to take care of Léocadie. At length we reached the entrance of the cave; we breathed with delight a freſh and pure air; and here we were all aſſembled without the cave in the open country. Then Léocadie approached to thank me, and I

ſaw

ſaw the moſt charming creature exiſting. Her beauty is celeſtial, and there is ſuch an innocence in all her perſon that the firſt ſenſation which her aſpect inſpires is as pure as the expreſſion of her countenance. One feels at firſt only what one would experience at the ſight of an angel. My firſt movement was to congratulate myſelf on being her brother, without conſidering that this title deprived me for ever of the hope of becoming her lover..... She was dreſſed with an elegance which I have never ſeen but in you..... She had on a ſtraw colour gown, a lilac ſaſh; a riband of the ſame colour confined her braided hair, and a natural roſe was placed on one ſide of her head. It is true that ſhe has all my father's features; and, conſequently, my dear aunt, ſhe reſembles you extremely; but not having black hair like yours, nor your roſy complexion, nor eyes of ſo dark a blue, ſhe ſtill more reſembles my father. While ſhe was ſpeaking

ing to me with a grace which nothing can deſcribe, Madame d'Erneville joining her, in order to thank me, aſked me my name. I mentioned it with a ſort of embarraſſment, and I was much moved in ſeeing Léocadie turn pale and ſtart.... I eſcorted Madame d'Erneville back to her houſe; ſhe gave me to underſtand, politely, that ſhe wiſhed me not to walk in; for, ſhe ſtopped at the door, at the ſame time repeating to me her thanks. Sighing, I made a low and melancholy bow, and immediately retired. This, my dear aunt, is all that I can tell you of the famous grottoes of Arcy. I there ſaw nothing but a *maſter-piece of Nature*, much more intereſting than *ſtalactites*, and the deſcription of Léocadie is full as good as that of a ſubterraneous cavern. Madame d'Erneville is ſtill very pretty; her bloom is aſtoniſhing; I know no countenance more ſweet and more agreeable than hers.

It

It is very fortunate for me that this angelic Léocadie is my ſiſter; but for this perſuaſion, I ſhould ſay like *Hyppolitus*, to whom my father ſo often compares me:

" *Un moment a vaincu mon audace imprudente;*
" *Cette âme ſi ſuperbe eſt enfin dépendante* *." ...

But I will candidly own to you that the indelible idea of Léocadie renders ſtill more diſagreeable to me the irkſome recollection of Mademoiſelle de Juſſy. You promiſed me, my dear aunt, to do every thing in your power to diſſuade my father from an alliance which would make me the moſt wretched of men. In the name of heaven, let not my father's perſeverance in this reſpect, and my mother's aſtoniſhing partiality for all this tireſome family, diſhearten you! I know all that can be ſaid in favour of *Aglaé de Juſſy*; ſhe is of

* One moment has ſubdued my blind preſumption; this haughty ſpirit is at length enſlaved.

a very

a very good family; ſhe is rich, pretty, and dances very well; but ſhe is taken up only with her perſon and her dreſs; ſhe neither loves reading nor the country; ſhe values nothing but what is *the faſhion*; ſhe is proud and coquettiſh; conſequently, ſhe has neither candour, good nature, nor ſenſibility. Is this, my dear aunt, the woman that can ſuit your pupil? In ſhort, I have a real antipathy to her; I hate even her perſon, which my father extols ſo much; that decided air, thoſe prim manners, that feeble, affected voice, thoſe forced laughs, thoſe eyes which were never made to look down at the ſight of a man, that front of eighteen which never bluſhes; all this diſpleaſes me dreadfully. Ah! when, in my imagination, I place her by the ſide of Léocadie, I think her hideous.

As I have committed none of the follies which diſhonour moſt of the young men who are coming into life, my father thinks me made of *ice:* he is much miſtaken; I love

I love you *with adoration*; and, had you not repreſſed this firſt ſentiment of my heart by ſo much cruel raillery, by ſermons ſo ſevere, and laſtly by *exile*, by baniſhing me far from you, this paſſion would have made the deſtiny of all my life. But you have diſguſted me with all women; I wiſh for one, not who equals you, but who at leaſt reſembles you a little, from the qualities of the mind and of the heart. Ah! Léocadie unites them all! She has even your features and bewitching countenance; however, ſhe has not your majeſtic air and impoſing look; but this is what I loved the leaſt in you..... The more I think of the matter, the leſs I conſole myſelf with the idea that Léocadie is my ſiſter!...

Adieu, my dear, my adorable aunt: I know not whether I ſhall reſume my natural gaiety; but, for ſome days paſt, I have been very melancholy. A letter from you can alone draw me from a ſituation ſo contrary to my diſpoſition.

LETTER VI.

The COUNTESS DE ROSMOND'S *Anſwer to* COUNT JULES.

I a M***, Auguſt 8.

I NEVER ſaw you ſo ſevere on this poor Aglaé, whoſe follies you exaggerate a little. However, you know, my dear Jules, that I ſhould alſo be very ſorry were ſhe to become your wife. My brother and my ſiſter-in-law are much bent on this marriage; but you ought not to fear any ſort of violence, you have nothing of the kind to dread with ſuch good parents.

As for the young and charming Léocadie, I ſhall aſtoniſh you greatly, by telling you that I am *certain* ſhe is not your ſiſter. By a very ſingular chain of ſtrange

events I have acquired this perfect certainty. But it is connected with ſecrets which have been entruſted to me, and which it is impoſſible for me to reveal. I even aſk of you, and I require from your probity, that you do not mention to any one whatever the explanation which I give you in this reſpect. I know your diſcretion and your principles; and this knowledge gives me a confidence that is not generally placed in a man of your age. Therefore, I will open to you my whole mind, and communicate to you my hopes and all my projects relating to you.

Although I am but three and thirty, that is, eleven years older than you, the pains that I have beſtowed on your education, and the manner in which you have profited by them, have inſpired me for you with a ſentiment truly maternal. I ſhall never marry, and Jules ſhall always be *my only ſon*. Sole heireſs of the great eſtates of my aunt, I have a very conſiderable

ſiderable fortune of which I can diſpoſe at my pleaſure. Be, therefore, fully perſuaded that you ſhall not be married *againſt my will.* With the fortune of your parents and mine, you will one day be the richeſt man about court; to wiſh alſo for riches in the wife that you may chooſe, would be an abſurd piece of avarice. And, indeed, this is not what determines your relations in favour of Mademoiſelle de Juſſy; they are ſeduced only by her connexions, her great birth, her pretty perſon, and your mother's intimacy with Madame de Juſſy. I have long been of your opinion reſpecting Mademoiſelle de Juſſy, and you know it. I paſſionately deſire for my nephew, my pupil, my ſon, an amiable and virtuous wife..... And I tell him in confidence, that all I have heard of Léocadie makes me ardently wiſh to be able one day to call her *my daughter!* ..... The man whom I moſt eſteem, the

Viſcount de St. Méran, has known her from her earlieſt infancy, and has drawn me of her the moſt enchanting portrait. This, my friend, is the wife that, in the bottom of my heart, I intend for you. Judge whether your laſt letter gave me pleaſure..... But, independently of the prejudices of birth which we have againſt us, we muſt alſo conquer many other dificulties; we will accompliſh the matter, if you will ſuffer yourſelf to be guided by me, and have perfect diſcretion. I will do every thing, yes every thing, in order to obtain the ſucceſs that I wiſh for; I have in the whole world but this ſole intereſt and this ſole buſineſs. But here is what I require of you: 1ſt, Abſolute ſecrecy: 2dly, That you have recourſe to no artifice to ſee Léocadie again, to ſpeak to her, or even to forward a letter to her. If you diſobey me in this, I ſhould know it; I have, for that purpoſe, certain means; then

then I ſhould ceaſe to eſteem you, and I would irrevocably renounce this project. If you accept theſe conditions, if you give me your word to fulfil them, I will, without loſing any time, employ myſelf ſolely, and without intermiſſion, on an affair which, by making your happineſs, will enſure mine.

Adieu, my dear Jules; burn this letter, and anſwer me without delay.

LETTER VII.

COUNT JULES' *Anſwer to the* COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

Moulins, Auguſt 12.

SHE is not my ſiſter! .... Great God! Léocadie is not my ſiſter! .... and you, my adorable friend, my dear benefactreſs, you are determined to unite my deſtiny to that of this angel! .... Yes, I ſwear to you by all that is moſt ſacred, to follow ſcrupulouſly all the laws which you impoſe on me; it will coſt me nothing to keep the ſecret, ſince I can talk of it to you; neither ſhould I have been tempted to write to her, even had you not forbid me; but I own to you, that I ſhould have wiſhed

wiſhed to ſee her again; ſince I know that ſhe is not my ſiſter I would give half of my life to have it in my power to contemplate her for ten minutes. Yet be aſſured that I ſhall obey you as perfectly on this point as on all the others.

O! my divine confidant! you who firſt made me know all my ſenſibility; it belonged to you alone to diſpoſe of a heart that you have animated. .... Your letter turns my brain! ... I am tranſported! I am in love! I am jealous! .... You who know every thing; tell me, are you very ſure that I have not a preferred rival? .... for pity's ſake, deign to diſpel my fears quickly in this reſpect! ....

I have here under my eyes your picture which you gave me ten years ago! Juſt heaven! how it reſembles *all that I love!* There is no confuſion in my head or heart; to love *the one* is to love *the other.* She has not your brilliancy, ſhe has not ſo much vivacity, ſo much fire in her

look; but here is the caſt of her eyes, her forehead; here is that noſe ſo delicate, ſo perfect; here is her charming mouth, here is that ſublime expreſſion of ſenſibility! .... It is *ſhe*, and I adore her, becauſe *it is you.*

Inſtead of putting this letter into the poſt-office, I ſend it to you by Vatel, whom I ſhall diſpatch in a moment, ſolely to carry you my anſwer.

Adieu, my guardian angel; ah! how I long to be at your feet!

LETTER VIII.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to the* COUNTESS DE BEL ***, CANONESS *of* ALIX.

Autun, Auguſt 22.

You appeared at Autun only to leave us regret. I could not conſole myſelf for your departure but by moving about; I made a little excurſion to Moulins. Every one there was ſtill relating a pleaſant ſcene that happened at the intendant's. The Marchioneſs d'Erneville and the beautiful Léocadie were there, face to face, with the Duke de Roſmond; *blood ſpoke* very indiſcreetly; Léocadie fainted away dead; the Duke, burſting into tears, took her

into his arms and placed her on a ſopha; all this in the preſence of eighty people.

It is upwards of four or five months ſince I heard from the Marquis de Celtas: I excuſe him; he is young and brilliant; and, carried into the vortex of the diſſipation of the court, he has ſcarcely time to write to his relations. He has all the requiſites for ſucceeding with the women; he will certainly make his way. I might have done the ſame; but my ſenſibility never allowed me to think of my fortune: beſides, there is in my diſpoſition a ſort of inflexibility, and even auſterity, which might aſtoniſh at court, and ſubjugate eſteem; but which was not likely to gain favour. In the little time that I paſſed there, I told them ſtrange truths; and I appeared to them, I aſſure you, a being of a very ſingular ſpecies. However, I prefer to greatneſs, bleſſings much more real, independence and friendſhip. Philoſophy

ſophy taught me, betimes, to diſdain Fortune, that imperious divinity who requires from her adorers the ſacrifice of the ſweeteſt ſentiments and the moſt agreeable inclinations;

" *Et ſur le peu de mérite*
" *De ceux qu'elle a bien traités,*
" *J'eus honte de la pourſuite*
" *De ſes aveugles bontés* *."

I am amuſing myſelf in writing *my memoirs:* I believe that this will be a ſtriking and original work: I ſhall communicate it to you; your approbation would give it a real value in my eyes. My reſpects to your amiable companions; ſpeak to them ſometimes of the man who, of all others, thinks the moſt frequently of you.

* Which may be thus imitated:

Such ſlender merit when I find,
In thoſe who moſt her favour ſhare;
I ſcorn a goddeſs that is blind,
And think her gifts beneath my care.

Chaulieu.

LETTER IX.

From the unknown Mother to her Daughter LÉOCADIE.

September 9.

LET this letter, my daughter, be for you alone! O! my child! ſince I have ſeen you, ſince I have enjoyed the inexpreſſible happineſs of preſſing you in my arms, ſince your tears have flowed on my boſom, I cannot live without ſpeaking to you of my affection, at leaſt as often as the enormous diſtance which ſeparates us will allow me. ..... I am determined to write to you; I am determined to correſpond with you, but ſecretly. I wiſhed that your benefactreſs, for her juſtification, might ſhew my

my former letters, and talk of my unexpected appearance at Erneville, now I am determined to write but to you alone. I want to open my heart to you, and to read in yours; Are you desirous of it, my Léocadie? Will you consent to it? I have easy and sure means of forwarding my letters to you, and of receiving yours, without any one possibly having the smallest suspicion. Ah! tell me quickly that you wish for this correspondence; promise me secrecy, and you shall know every thing.

The day after this letter reaches you, put your answer, in the dusk of the evening, in the hollow of *Léocadie's tree*, and cover it with moss. I shall receive it in the course of five or six days. Ah! I shall not live till then! ....

LETTER X.

LÉOCADIE's *Anſwer.*

Erneville-caſtle, September 9.

OH! moſt affectionate, moſt revered, and moſt beloved of mothers! .... I can then at laſt write to you..... You aſk me if I am deſirous of it: Ah! Great God! for two years this has been the moſt ardent of my wiſhes, ſince I dare not form that of ſeeing you!.... What! my mother! is it to you that I am writing! you will read this letter; you will deign to anſwer it! .... I ſhall be able to ſpeak to you again of my gratitude, my affection! Your orders are ſacred to me; it will coſt me dear, no doubt, to conceal from my benefactreſs,

neſactreſs, from my ſecond mother, the moſt important ſecret of my life, the ſecret which conſtitutes my happineſs; but I ſhall be ſilent without ſcruple, on conſidering that I obey you.

When I was at Paray, I durſt not carry you a letter, ſince I muſt have entruſted it to Jacinthe; but how frequently, ſince the happieſt day of my exiſtence, have I repented not having left you a note on quitting you! I thought that I ſhould have it in my power to ſpeak to you and expreſs to you all that I experienced; alas! I could only weep! .... And, even at this moment, I can only ſtill love and adore you: it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe to you what I feel! All the expreſſions that might give you an idea of it are become common, and have been profaned by exaggeration!

O! my mother! what a powerful intereſt you ſpread over my life! I am the *object of your deareſt hopes!* .... Ah! I will

will do every thing to realize them, do not doubt it. Give me an opportunity of proving to you my reſpect, my obedience, and my love; teach me how I can conſole you for your ſecret afflictions: theſe are the favours that I implore; this is the way in which you can render your Léocadie perfectly happy. I ſcarcely dare queſtion you..... Alas! when ſhall I ſee you again? At what period will maternal affection deign to lift up the frightful *veil* that ſeparates us?.... When ſhall I know the features of an adored mother? When will my looks be able to meet yours? What muſt I do to merit ſuch a favour? Ah! ſpeak! I have not the temerity to endeavour to penetrate what you wiſh to conceal; is it not ſufficient for me to know that you love me? I do not aſk of you your ſecrets, I aſk of you only a look.

I think of you every moment, and I cannot repreſent to myſelf your face!....

This

This is an inſupportable torment..... Not daring to write the beloved name of *Roſalba* on the bark of my tree, I have traced it on a ſlap of white marble with the date of *the year*, *the month*, *the day*, and *the hour*; and I have placed this inſcription in the hollow of my tree; I have covered it over with turf, moſs, and baſe rocket *, and I have planted all round the tree ſome *moſs-roſes* which I water every day!.... Cheriſhed tree! ſacred tree! become the object of my worſhip and love, I ſhall regret to my lateſt breath that thou canſt not ſhade my grave!....

Near the turf ſeat where I enjoyed the happineſs of finding myſelf in your arms, where I preſſed and kiſſed your hands, I have put this inſcription:

" ——— *O ſacri nodi*
" *Del ſangue et di natura, quanto forti*
" *Voi ſiete* †."

* *Reſeda*. Linn.

† Oh! how ſtrong you are, ye ſacred ties of blood and nature! MAFFEI's tragedy of *Merope*.

Adieu,

Adieu, beſt beloved of mothers! Let your heart inform you of all that paſſes in mine, and communicate to you all the ſentiments of your grateful and dutiful Léocadie.

LETTER XI.

The unknown Mother's Anſwer.

Sept. 14.

I HAVE this moment received the letter which makes an *epoch* in my life, and one of the deareſt! .... I read the aſſurances of your affection! .... But what melancholy reflections, what bitter ſentiments mingled with my joy and adulterate it! ... You call me the beſt *beloved of mothers!* .... Ah! Léocadie! is not the *beſt beloved* by you ſhe who adopted you? ....

Anſwer

Anſwer me; can I flatter myſelf with being placed even in the ſame rank in your heart? .... What do I ſay? Ah! beware of ever comparing affections ſo ſacred; reaſon, in weighing them, might perhaps reſtrain them, and the heart, in giving way to them, cannot preſcribe to them any limits.... Is not your benefactreſs mine! Oh! how much I reſpect her! how dear ſhe is to me! I am indebted to her for your virtues and the principles which will conſtitute your pride and happineſs..... Let her ever be for you the beloved object of the moſt lively gratitude, of the moſt juſt admiration; a perfect model as ſhe is of virtue, let her be always yours!..... Theſe are her rights: your unhappy mother has them not!..... ſhe muſt acknowledge it, but can never be conſoled for it!

I have but one advantage over your adoptive mother; one only, but a very great one. Whatever may be her ſenſi-

bility,

bility, it is impoſſible that ſhe can love you as much as I love you. She has ſo many other objects of attachment; ſhe has other children; and for me, I have only you, my Léocadie; I fondly love but you alone!

Since you have exiſted, my dear child, I have always had the means of being informed of every thing that could relate to you .... In ſhort, I have long ſince contrived to gain over *Jacinthe*.... She is ignorant both of my ſituation and my name; ſhe knows only that I am your mother; it is to her that you may give your letters, and ſhe it is who will, in future, deliver you mine. The penſion which ſhe now receives from me, and what ſhe reaſonably expects from me in the ſequel, will enſure me her fidelity; ſhe will certainly not betray us; but, nevertheleſs, grant her no ſort of confidence. You do no more than your duty in concealing, even from your benefactreſs, what I forbid

I forbid you to reveal; and Jacinthe betrays hers in not acquainting her miſtreſs of every thing that concerns the young girl entruſted to her care; and the money which ſhe accepts from me renders this action equally vile and reprehenſible. I ought alſo to reproach myſelf with giving money which it is ſhameful to receive; but, alas! I had but this one method of correſponding with you!.... Such is the fatal influence of the crime that gave you birth!.... Ah! how can I expiate this firſt fault, the only one of my life, when the moſt lawful ſentiments which reſult from it oblige me inceſſantly to envelop myſelf in the ſhades of myſtery, to diſſemble, and to deceive!.... I abhor fineſſe and falſehood, and I am continually forced to have recourſe to them!.... Ah! be ever irreproachable and pure; the moſt ſincere repentance cannot reſtore perfect virtue; even when the heart is purified, life ſtill remains ſtained by equivocal and

obſcure

obſcure ſteps, and by a neceſſary diſſimulation!....

You know only my weakneſs, and not the circumſtances which render it excuſable. I had not the good fortune to be brought up like you..... my relations gave me none but frivolous accompliſhments, and they neglected to cultivate my underſtanding, and, above all, my reaſon! .... I was, from my childhood, permitted to read novels; my heart was not corrupted; but my imagination became inflamed..... Confined, till the *age of ſixteen*, within the precincts of an old caſtle, a hundred and fifty miles from Paris, there deprived of all ſociety, having no idea of the world, of mankind, or even of the rules of propriety, heireſs of an immenſe fortune; in ſhort, impetuous, giddy, feeling, and romantic, how could I avoid going aſtray!.... I wholly abandoned myſelf to a ſentiment which appeared to me both reaſonable and lawful; I was deceived

deceived by falſe appearances..... This error, and a moment of weakneſs, proved my ruin: I was then ſixteen!.... From that fatal moment I have not ceaſed one ſingle day to regret the loſs of my innocence, and to weep over my fault! Maternal affection, far from conſoling me, only aggravates the bitterneſs of my repentance. How conſole myſelf for a weakneſs which muſt deprive me of your eſteem! Even were my heart not naturally formed for virtue, I ſhould adore it, on conſidering that it can alone render me more worthy of being loved by you..... For theſe ſix years eſpecially, the recollection of you is ſo blended with all my good actions, that I am ignorant whether I be prompted to them by beneficence or a ſenſe of honour, or merely by the wiſh of acquiring new rights over your heart, and of uniting myſelf more cloſely to you. Dear object of my affection, the ſentiment with which you inſpire me is ſo ſublime,

that

that I can neither ſeparate it at an inſtant, nor diſtinguiſh it from the love of virtue! Adieu; my daughter! Adieu, my Léocadie! Yes; we will ſee each other again: Ah! but for this hope could I endure your abſence!

LETTER XII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

October 1.

GOOD God! my friend, we have a very different ſubject of fear from that with which you ſaw us troubled ſome years ago: this is much worſe than a *ghoſt*. Conceive that, in Erneville foreſt, there is a mad wolf, which has even come into the village; he bit Rochu's great maſtiff, and this

this dog died mad!..... A poor little child too has been the victim of this horrible beaſt!.... Nothing can be compared to our fright. We no longer dare go out; the hermit has decamped from the foreſt, and the fright is general. And Albert, who is now almoſt always abſent, is not here; he is with Maurice and Stephen ninety miles off!..... What muſt I do?.... I have been adviſed to write to the commandant of the province. Madame Regnard tells me that, near Lyons, twenty years ago, on account of a ſimilar ſcourge, government ſent troops which were ordered to hunt down the beaſt. Adviſe me, my dear friend; what courſe ought I to take? There are ſo many troops quartered at Moulins; we might have a detachment very quickly. Adieu, my friend; I cannot deſcribe to you my agitation and terror.

All things conſidered, I am going to write to the commandant, for I hear that

he is at Moulins; I ſhall diſpatch a ſpecial meſſenger. However, I ſend you this letter in order to beg you not to come here till we have got rid of this alarming intruder. I firmly believe that you run no riſk in a carriage; but, nevertheleſs, you muſt paſs on the ſkirts of the foreſt, and I ſhould die with fright to know that you were there; do not come on Thurſday; wait till you hear from me.

LETTER XIII.

The BARONESS's *Anſwer.*

October 1.

I PARTAKE of your fright, my dear friend, and, inſtead of not going to your houſe till Thurſday, I ſhall come to-morrow at the head of an army; for Monſieur du Reſnel, who was here when I received your

your note, ſaid, on the ſpur of the moment, that he would arm his ſervants and peaſants, and take the field at the head of them very early to-morrow morning. At theſe words, the Baron felt his ancient warlike valour revive, and alſo determined to arm a detachment; the two generals, Du Reſnel and the Baron, will be on horſeback, and I ſhall be in a cabriolet: they will eſcort me to the entrance of the village; whence the warriors will repair to the foreſt, and your female friend come to you. Adieu, till to-morrow; I ſhall be with you between eight and nine o'clock.

LETTER XIV.

From COUNT JULES *to the* COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

Moulins, October 6.

MY dear, my divine friend! what things I have to tell you!... You will applaud me, you will praiſe me, you will ſcold me; I deſerve all this: but I ſhall begin by relating to you what will certainly obtain your approbation.

On the firſt of this month, I was dining at the houſe of the commandant of the province; we were juſt riſing from table, when a letter, brought by an expreſs, was delivered to the commandant: after having read it to himſelf, he told us that the Marchioneſs

Marchioneſs d'Erneville neither having her huſband with her nor her eldeſt ſon, had communicated to him the fright occaſioned her by a *mad wolf* that was committing ravages on her eſtate.... I would hear no more; I began to ſpeak, and aſked permiſſion to ſet out for Erneville foreſt with two companies well armed. I ſolicited, I urged my ſuit, I obtained it; I ſet off, choſe my companies, and decided that we ſhould march that very night, in order to be at break of day in the the foreſt; which was carried into immediate execution.

Guided by ſome peaſants, for whom I had ſent to the village, we formed a circle; we ſtarted the wolf: we were hunting him in full cry by dawn of day, and, at a quarter before ten, your pupil, your Jules came up with the *monſter*, aimed at him, fired at him, and brought him to the ground by a muſket-ſhot!... I got off my horſe, and, with my ſabre, I cut off the foot of

the beaſt, and ſent Vatel to Erneville caſtle, with orders to take this glorious token of my victory, and lay it at the feet of Madame d'Erneville; for I durſt not addreſs it to the *real object!* .... At this moment we heard an extraordinary noiſe of horſes and men advancing towards us, but who came too late; theſe were the Marchioneſs's neighbours at the head of a troop of peaſants, armed, in order to hunt the wolf. I recollected Monſieur du Reſnel whom I had ſeen before at the grottoes of Arcy; I related to him the manner in which I had decided to come; but I did not pronounce *Léocadie*'s name. After having trodden in the ſteps of *Hercules* and *Theſeus*, I conducted myſelf with the prudence of *Telemachus*, and as if I had been inſpired by Minerva or by *Urania*. .... I was congratulated on my exploit; and, after ſome compliments, I haſtened to announce that I was going to Paray, to reſt a few hours with my detachment; and

that,

that, afterwards, I ſhould return to Moulins. I then parted from the army of villagers, and ſetting my horſe off at full ſpeed, I came up to a pretty high gate; I wiſhed to clear it; my horſe balked at it, threw up his heels, and brought me to the ground, giving me a kick in the head at the moment when I was falling. The blow was ſo violent that I fainted on the ſpot. I was carried ſenſeleſs into the houſe of a gamekeeper at the diſtance of two hundred paces; I was laid on a bed; I recovered my ſenſes, and I learnt that I was only half a mile from Erneville caſtle.... I reſolved to reſt myſelf for an hour at the gamekeeper's, and ſet out again for Moulins, although I had a very conſiderable wound in my head.... In the courſe of a quarter of an hour I heard a carriage, and judge of my emotion on ſeeing Madame d'Erneville enter the room with another lady, called the Baroneſs de Vordac, and Monſieur du Reſnel. The Marchioneſs,

with a degree of ſenſibility which made a deep impreſſion on me, came up to me, thanked me, and offered to take me to her houſe. I poſitively refuſed this offer; but I ſuffered my wound to be dreſſed by a man, belonging to her ſuite, whom ſhe had brought with her. This man, who alſo underſtood bleeding, would abſolutely take from me three pallets of blood. Madame d'Erneville, during all theſe operations, remained in my room, renewed her former offers, and, ſeeing that I was not to be prevailed on, entreated me to accept one of her carriages to take me to Moulins; which I likewiſe refuſed. She made me ſwallow and inhale ſome vulnerary medicine; in ſhort, ſhe paid me as much attention as you could have done. After all this, I called for my horſe, and took leave of Madame d'Erneville; her eyes were filled with tears; it did not require ſo much to ſoften me; the *wounded hero* could no longer check his feelings; he

ſeized

ſeized one of the Marchioneſs's hands, and a few tears eſcaped from his *ſtoical* eyes! The Marchioneſs, warmly affected, embraced me.... this woman is an angel. I cloſely ſqueezed her hand, which I ſtill held, and then I abruptly went away; I remounted my horſe and departed. Is this conduct heroic and unexceptionable? I might lawfully again behold Léocadie, paſs two or three days with her under the ſame roof; and I had the courage to reſiſt all this temptation! But I knew that you would approve this effort, that Madame d'Erneville would take it infinitely kind of me, and that this reſerved and delicate behaviour, joined to a great proof of zeal and the moſt tender intereſt, would obtain me Léocadie's eſteem and friendſhip. How advantageous it is to behave properly! Virtue is ſo uſeful, that the man the moſt conſtantly virtuous always appears, in the eye of reaſon, to be him only who has the moſt foreſight.

This, my adorable guardian, is the fineſt part of my hiſtory .... the remainder will make you knit your beautiful black eyebrows; no matter: I will conceal nothing; you ſhall know all.

You had me taught to draw and to paint; and you have often told me that I was no more than a dauber; well, I have executed a maſter-piece!.... Although I had your picture, I ſtill wiſhed for *another*, and I determined to have it from you; this was doubling its value! Here is the way in which you gave it to me. I copied your portrait, I made in it only ſome very trifling alterations, I painted eyes of a blue leſs deep, light auburn air, and cheeks of a carnation leſs lively.... I dreſſed this figure with a ſtraw colour gown, and a lilac ſaſh, I placed a roſe on her head; it was ſtill you, and it was alſo *Léocadie coming out of the grottoes of Arcy*.... This picture is not very *highly finiſhed*; but the drawing of it is correct and the likeneſs perfect!

perfect! I put this portrait into a gold medallion, and, not daring to trace the name of the *object*, I engraved on one of the ſides theſe words, "*Grottoes of Arcy*;" and on the reverſe, "*Indelible remem-*" "*brance.*" I faſtened this medallion to a long gold chain, and I put it round my neck, well concealed under my ſhirt, waiſt-coat, and coat. I thought it in ſafety there; but this is what happened. When I was carried ſenſeleſs into the game-keeper's houſe, Vatel, in placing me on the bed, undid my collar, opened my ſhirt, and ſaw that the gold chain, being twiſted, confined my neck which was exceſſively ſwelled at that moment. Wiſhing to unlooſe the chain, he broke it; the game-keeper received it from his hands with the medallion, and locked it up in a cloſet. On coming to myſelf, I did not perceive that I had loſt this treaſure. Madame d'Erneville's viſit prolonged this abſence of mind. When I ſet off ſo abruptly, the

gamekeeper was not there; and the medallion was forgotten both by Vatel and myſelf. It was not till I was ſix miles from Erneville, and beyond Paray, where I made no ſtop, that I perceived all at once I had no longer this beloved picture! Vatel, queſtioned and ſcolded, was ſent back to the gamekeeper's; it was too late: three quarters of an hour after my departure, the gamekeeper, recollecting that he had been entruſted with this medallion, carried it immediately to the caſtle, and delivered it to the Marchioneſs. In all this movement it had opened; the Marchioneſs ſaw the picture, took it from its place, and ſent me the medallion empty! .... So ſhe *robbed* me without any ſcruple; and this is my ſole reward for having killed her *mad wolf!* Is not this very ungrateful? She has, however, ſent twice to inquire how I was. Yet, my dear aunt, do not be afraid that this can lead to a diſcovery that I have your picture. When I came

I came into this country, you made me promiſe that I would ſay I had loſt it, in order that you might diſpenſe with getting it copied for *the perſon* who aſked it of you with ſo much earneſtneſs. Since that time no one living has ſeen it; and if, by chance (which I do not think likely) the adventure of *Léocadie*'s portrait were known, people would ſtill be ignorant by what means I had been enabled to procure it. But, certainly, Madame d'Erneville will not ſpeak to me of this incident, and the ſecret will be well kept.

I know, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that the Marchioneſs thinks Léocadie is my father's daughter, conſequently all that I have done has, in her eyes, no other cauſe than fraternal friendſhip. A *vulgar* lover would be vexed that Léocadie ſhould remain in ſuch an error, and I am charmed at it; ſhe thinks of me without confuſion; far from driving me from her remembrance, ſhe fancies herſelf obliged to love

me; ſhe employs her thoughts on me with a degree of intereſt; is not this a great deal? She will imagine that I have drawn her picture by means of a portrait of my father, painted in his youthful days: I would rather that ſhe ſhould believe I did it only from memory!

She is not my ſiſter! you intend her for me!... what incomprehenſible myſtery! And how can you know, on this ſubject, with certainty, what Madame d'Erneville and every one are ignorant of? and how then explain this ſtriking likeneſs!.... In ſhort, I believe you blindly, you my guide, you whom I adore, whom I admire and love as a divinity, I abandon myſelf to you; from you alone I received ſenſibility and knowledge; from you alone I expect happineſs.

Adieu, my reſpectable and dearly beloved friend; I kiſs both your beautiful hands with all the affection of my heart.

The

The wound in my head has made me ſuffer much for three days; I have been bled a ſecond time; but I have been perfectly well ſince yeſterday.

LETTER XV.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

October 15.

MONSIEUR and Madame d'Olbreuſe arrived here yeſterday evening, and will remain with us a fortnight. They came through Moulins, and there ſaw Count Jules, on whom they, with rapture, paſſed ſome very juſtly merited encomiums. This engaging young man ſet out the next day for Paris. His conduct at Moulins has been as unexceptionable as the preceding

ceding year's. At that age, to ſo many graces, ſo handſome a perſon, ſuch a vivacity, a gaiety ſo charming, to join morals ſo pure, a ſenſibility ſo true, and ſo paſſionate a fondneſs for ſtudy! How much I am obliged to him for his conduct towards us, and for that *fraternal friendſhip* ſo affecting and ſo delicate! Léocadie is penetrated by it. She aſked me for the *portrait of the grottoes of Arcy* and *the wolf's foot*. Theſe two articles will be carefully preſerved.

What a difference between the ſon and the father! The latter, for my eternal misfortune, introduced himſelf here, in ſpite of me, under the pretext of a feigned hurt; and the ſon really and ſeverely wounded, in having rendered us the greateſt ſervice, would not ſet his foot in my houſe when I invited him to it, merely becauſe he felt that I could not receive him there without ſome embarraſſment.

This adventure put Albert very much out of humour, and even Maurice, who is inconſolable that a ſtranger ſhould have killed *our wolf*, as he calls it. This action appears to him an uſurpation. There was, on this ſubject, a ſort of quarrel between him and Léocadie. Maurice talked foolishly; Albert took his part, and with an extreme dryneſs towards Léocadie, which put an end to the diſpute; for Maurice's good heart could not bear to ſee Léocadie ſilenced and afflicted; he immediately ſaid that he was in the wrong, and then Albert looked ſour at him!....

It is decided that we ſhall all dine at Gilly on Thurſday, and we appoint you to meet us there. Madame d'Olbreuſe longs to ſee you again; ſhe is extremely amiable.

Adieu, my friend; let me know whether I may flatter myſelf with the happineſs of ſeeing you on Thurſday.

LETTER XVI.

From the unknown Mother to LÉOCADIE.

October 16.

My dear child, Madame d'Olbreuſe will aſk your benefactreſs to allow her to bring you with her to Paris for two months only. Oh! do not deny yourſelf this journey, which will procure me the inexpreſſible happineſs of ſeeing you again! But let this, as well as our correſpondence, remain between ourſelves for ever buried in the moſt profound ſecrecy! ....

Adieu, my dearly beloved Léocadie; judge with what agitation and impatience I am waiting for the deciſion of a thing ſo paſſionately wiſhed for! ....

LETTER XVII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

October 25.

WELL, my friend, Léocadie quits me, and ſhe wiſhes it..... In five days ſhe ſets out for Paris with Madame d'Olbreuſe. The latter aſked me leave yeſterday to take Léocadie with her for *ſix weeks or two months*, ſaying to me that it appeared to her *deſirable* that a young girl, with *ſo complete an education*, ſo many accompliſhments, and ſo much taſte for the arts, ſhould make a little excurſion to Paris, in order to ſee there the celebrated monuments, and ſuperb collections of pictures, natural hiſtory, &c. Madame d'Olbreuſe added, that, during theſe two months, ſhe would

would fix her abode in the country near Paris, would poſitively receive there but three or four friends of a certain age, and would go to Paris only to ſhew Léocadie all the curioſities; and without ever ſleeping there; and that, in ſhort, ſhe would herſelf bring her back to me towards the end of December..... Thunderſtruck at this propoſal, I merely replied that I ſhould not oppoſe this journey if Léocadie conſented to it..... Léocadie was called; I communicated to her Madame d'Olbreuſe's requeſt and my anſwer; Léocadie turned pale, coloured, wept, and trembled; but, without wavering, without heſitating a minute, ſhe accepted the offer.... Ah! to you I own it, never did a more ſevere and more unexpected blow ſtrike my heart, this heart too much alive to feeling, torn for ſuch a length of time by ſo many known and ſecret troubles!... However, I checked myſelf, I wept not! The moſt lively and moſt painful reſentment ſtifled my

my ſenſibility, and ſuſpended my tears. I got up, ſaying: "I am going to order the "neceſſary preparations for your journey!" and I left the room. I ran to Léocadie's apartment, and I ordered Jacinthe to pack up, in trunks, every thing belonging to Léocadie, and that immediately, and not to forget a ſingle article. At this moment I was ſent for by Madame d'Olbreuſe, and was told that Léocadie had fainted; I forgot all my anger, and flew to her. Alas! ſhe was in a condition truly frightful; pale as death, cold, trembling, and weeping with a bitterneſs of which nothing can give an idea..... I took her into my arms; I embraced her a thouſand times, I aſſured her that I did not doubt her affection, that I by no means diſapproved of this journey, that I even was ſenſible that it would be very uſeful to her; in a word, I ſaid to her every thing that could conſole her; but in vain: ſhe ſtill wept with the ſame vehemence, and conſtantly

ſtantly preſerved a ſilence which was interrupted only by groans and painful exclamations..... Oh! how I have reproached myſelf for this heart-rending ſcene, which has left me a dreadful and indelible recollection! How great is the remorſe of having grievouſly afflicted what we love!... Of what conſequence is it to have been in the right: the real crime, the real misfortune is to reduce to deſpair the object for which we would give our life!....

In the confuſion I was in I forgot to countermand the orders given in my paſſion to Jacinthe; Léocadie ſaw *three large* trunks collected in her room, and the maids employed in filling them; which made her underſtand that I expected a total ſeparation. She then threw herſelf at my feet, and ſaid to me every thing moſt endearing that grief and affection could inſpire; but *without retracting* the conſent given to the journey. I maintained that I feared only

only a longer abſence; ſhe proteſted and gave me her word that ſhe would not ſtay above two months. Alas! will ſhe be able to keep it? She will abſolutely take nothing but a large portmanteau, a clothes' bag, and half of her trinkets. I am very certain that the hope of ſeeing her mother again is the only thing that can determine her on quitting me; but why conceal from me the motive? why fail thus in the confidence which ſhe owes me?

I thought that, perhaps, her mother had found means to get a letter delivered to her without my knowledge, which is very poſſible through Madame d'Olbreuſe, who certainly is her mother's confidant; but what ingratitude on the part of this unknown mother, to thus rob me of the confidence of the child for whom I have done every thing, and who coſts me ſo dear!... And could not Léocadie, without betraying her ſecret, confide to me merely that *a powerful reaſon* made her deſirous of this journey?

journey? She has feared either my queſtions or my penetration; and ſhe has been compelled to diſſemble with me!.... In ſhort, why did not her mother write to me openly to aſk for her daughter? Does ſhe wiſh to conceal her intimacy with Madame d'Olbreuſe? Has ſhe ſome ſecret intereſt that obliges her to this myſtery? It is poſſible. In this uncertainty we muſt conceal our conjectures; and this, moſt aſſuredly, is what I will do, and what I poſitively require from you, my friend. Beſides, Albert would receive this confidence with his accuſtomed incredulity: all that he might poſſibly believe is, that Madame d'Olbreuſe is the confidant of Léocadie's *father*, and that ſhe wiſhes to procure him the pleaſure of ſeeing her again. In ſhort, Madame d'Olbreuſe and Albert do not love each other, a circumſtance that I have long ſince remarked; which makes me imagine that Albert knows, perhaps, that ſhe is intimate with

the

the Duke de Roſmond. This idea gives me myſelf ſome doubts concerning the reality of the mother's exiſtence. If, in fact, all that we have ſeen was nothing more than a fiction contrived by this intriguing and profoundly-artful man, who has, all his life, made a ſport of deceit and falſehood!..... Yet, how believe that Madame d'Olbreuſe would be inſtrumental in favouring ſuch an intrigue! Could ſhe without the knowledge of her huſband, and would the Count ſuffer it? But who can penetrate the motives of people that live at court? Their connexions, founded on intereſt and ambition, engage them ſo often to take equivocal ſteps, even quite contrary to their inclinations and principles! In truth, I no longer know what to think.... I tell every one that it is I who wiſh that Léocadie ſhould make this little journey; for it would be dreadful to me if it could be ſuppoſed that it is ſhe who

wiſhes

wiſhes to quit me, without any other motive than that of curioſity to ſee Paris! .... What chagrin I am forced to confine in the bottom of my heart!....

I would ſhe were gone, ſince ſhe muſt go in five days!.... At preſent, whenever I look at her, I can, with difficulty, reſtrain my tears.... What a moment will that of her departure be!.... How different from that of my going to Dijon, which has already given me ſo much pain! A ſacred duty forced me to part from her; my inquietude reſpecting my mother abſorbed all my other ſentiments; I left Léocadie at home; I was going only ſixty miles from Erneville!.... At this day it is ſhe who is to quit me; a woman, who is no relation, is going to take her two hundred and forty miles from me!.... And who knows whether I ſhall ever ſee her again? If her mother really exiſt, is it not to take her back and to keep her

that

that ſhe ſends for her? .... Into what hands is this beloved child going to fall? .... O! God! how cruel are all theſe anxieties! ..... I own to you that, ſince yeſterday, Madame d'Olbreuſe is become odious to me; I miſtruſt her; and all her demonſtrations of friendſhip no longer appear to me any thing but falſehood! .... I am, perhaps, unjuſt; this idea is an additional torment; perhaps all my ſuppoſitions are only chimeras. Madame d'Olbreuſe, charmed with the graces of a young girl really incomparable, has, perhaps, no other view than that of being uſeful to her and of procuring her the advantage of making an excurſion equally agreeable and inſtructive: then Léocadie would quit me only for her pleaſure! ... It would ſtill be poſſible for her to know that her mother is in Paris without Madame d'Olbreuſe being in this ſecret.... I bewilder myſelf in all theſe ſuppoſitions; I cannot, for a quarter of an hour toge-

ther, dwell on the ſame idea .... this ſituation is inſupportable !.... Ah ! my dear friend, I never was ſo agitated and ſo unhappy !

LETTER XVIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

November 1.

She is gone !.... ſhe went about an hour ago .... now every minute increaſes her diſtance from me ! .... At her age every thing calls off the attention ; we are eaſily afflicted, we are conſoled in the ſame manner ! Ah ! ſo much the better. May I ſuffer alone ! .... The ſituation I am in is not conceivable, nor is it natural .... this profound and heart-rending grief can be

be inſpired only by a fatal preſentiment. Ah! my friend, I ſhall never ſee her again! .... no; never! I am ſure of it; this will be my death! Yes, I love her too much! it amounts even to real idolatry, and conſequently is a culpable folly! Heaven will puniſh me for it; I ſhall ſee her no more! .... Ah! it is in his kindneſs that God forbids us to entertain impaſſioned ſentiments! what a fraternal prohibition! what can we admire on earth? Virtues always impartial and often deceitful, frail, inconſtant creatures, from whom death or abſence can ſeparate us for ever. ... Oh! is this idea alone ſufficient to poiſon all the charms of the moſt happy attachment! ... Yet the heart muſt have an object that can fill it entirely. I am determined to admire with tranſport; I am determined to love without meaſure! Ah! I cannot lawfully love but in aſcending to the real ſource of perfection! Senſibility, that precious faculty of loving without

bounds, is only a diſtraction and a folly, when it has not for its object a being perfect and infinite!

The care of diſſembling my grief renders it ſtill more bitter..... No one here pities me! my character is no longer divined, I am no longer known!... Albert, on this occaſion, is not amiable towards me; he ſeems not to ſuſpect that this departure can afflict me; I even ſee that he is delighted at the abſence of the poor little girl; he does not love her!... Maurice is full as gay as uſual: Zéphyrine wept only for a moment; Mademoiſelle du Rocher is inſupportable from the ill-timed things which ſhe ſays on the ſubject. .... every one appears to me unfeeling and vulgar!... How peeviſh and diſcontented am I!

I have juſt received a note from her, and a very affecting one.... I had given them my horſes to take them the firſt ſtage;

ſtage; ſhe has written to me by the poſtilion who brought back the horſes. Ah! my dear friend; how I love her, and how ſuffering and agitated is my poor heart!

LETTER XIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

November 8.

At length a third letter from her informs me that ſhe is arrived. This is a great weight off my mind, to know that ſhe is ſafe and ſound in Paris. She is not accuſtomed to travelling; how much I was in fear for her, on account of the fatigue, the bad accommodations, the want of ſleep, and all the accidents that may happen on the road! ... She is ſettled at St. Mandé,

in a charming country-houſe, a mile and a half from Paris. May ſhe be amuſed there! Let her be happy and contented, and I ſhall have nothing to complain of.

The poor woman, of whom I take care, has been very ill for ſome days paſt; I ſat up with her all Monday night; ſhe is now out of danger. You know how intereſting ſhe is, and how much concerned I ſhould be to loſe her, the more eſpecially as, in ſpite of myſelf, I attach a ſuperſtitious idea to the preſervation of her life! I took her, ſince my mother's illneſs, through a motive of religious gratitude, inſpired by filial piety; ſhe is of the age of my mother; her death would be to me the moſt dreadful of omens! .... Thank heaven! ſhe is perfectly well. The doctor has preſcribed for her the baths of Bourbon this ſpring, and I will certainly take her thither. She told me yeſterday, that ſhe had *been very apprehenſive* of dying, and that I was the cauſe of her fear; "for,"

added

added ſhe, "*I am ſo happy!*" this excellent woman is no longer for me the object of a truly good action, ſhe repays me by a gratitude which it is rare to find ſo warm and ſo affectionate among thoſe of her condition.

Ah! my friend, how far are we ſtill from that ſublime philanthropy preſcribed by the goſpel!

In order to grow proud of the good we do when we are rich, it is ſufficient to reflect on that which we might do, if we poſſeſſed a truly chriſtian charity. I am not fond of luxury; but how much do I indulge myſelf in little fancies, and how much money do I ſpend in little uſeleſs preſents, inſtead of giving it to the poor.

During the night on which I ſat up with Monique, I reflected on this; and I repreſented to myſelf the painful picture of human miſeries; I put myſelf in the place of an unfortunate mother without talents, without reſources, who ſees her

children in want of ſubſiſtence! Theſe ideas ſtruck me ſo forcibly that my heart was oppreſſed by them..... Ah! I am ſenſible of it, religion and humanity enjoin not only charity, they alſo preſcribe to us to retrench all ſuperfluous expences, all vain fancies, to reduce ourſelves to ſimple neceſſaries, and to give away the reſt. How happy ſhould I be, if, rid of the ſhackles of cuſtom, and far from the buſy world, I could wear a coarſe ſtuff gown, be attended by only one maid, and burn none but common candles!... Honourable and noble economy, how you would delight my heart! you would inceſſantly recall to my mind little ſacrifices, which would procure me the only real happineſs that can be enjoyed on earth. If it be noble to reſign ourſelves to poverty, what is it then to impoſe it voluntarily on ourſelves, in behalf of human nature? There is in this ſacrifice ſomething heroic, which would pleaſe my mind even though it were

not

not to affect my heart. There is nothing virtuous in giving to the object we know, and love, or who pleaſes us; we gratify our inclinations. I ſhall not rank in the number of my good actions what I have done, and what I may do for Léocadie; on the contrary, I will acknowledge that I ought to have given her leſs, and poured on ſome unfortunate creatures a thouſand ſuperfluities which I could not abſtain from beſtowing on her. But I ſhall make amends for this weakneſs by reducing ſtill more my expenſes. True virtue conſiſts in giving to beings who ſuffer, and from whom we expect neither pleaſure nor gratitude.

Philoſophy, which talks ſo much of *beneficence*, is very inconſiſtent in this reſpect (as well as in ſo many others), ſince it does not reprobate every ſort of oſtentation. If charity be the firſt of virtues, luxury is a crime, and it ought to be diſgraceful.

Can it be denied that the woman who gives a thouſand louis to have a diamond neck-lace, prefers the pleaſure of wearing on her neck a brilliant ornament to the happineſs of relieving and ſaving *twenty* expiring and diſconſolate *families*? Yet this very woman will launch out into fine phraſes on beneficence: has ſhe a right to do ſo? .... Madame d'Olbreuſe related to me that a lady of her acquaintance, who is reckoned to be very *tender-hearted*, ſpends at leaſt ten or twelve thouſand livres a year in millinery. With ſuch prodigality, and a frivolity ſo ſhameful and ſo culpable, how dare people talk of humanity? The religious man alone is, on this point, always conſiſtent; he alone is capable of ſacrificing his inclinations, and of deſpiſing cuſtom in order to ſuccour the unfortunate. The *philoſopher* thinks he does a great deal by ſometimes ſacrificing a very ſmall part of his ſurplus; while the man truly pious, by giving

giving the whole of it, thinks he performs no more than an indiſpenſable and ſacred duty.

Adieu, my friend; I follow exactly the regimen which you preſcribe for me; I drink chicken broth, and I bathe; but I ſhall not ſleep till ſhe comes back!

LETTER XX.

From the COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* MARCHIONESS.

Dijon, November 12.

I KNOW, my dear child, that you do not eat, that you are altered, fallen away, and I fully imagine that Léocadie's abſence is the cauſe of this. Ah! my dear friend, be more reaſonable. Maternal tenderneſs

ought not to have any of the weakneſſes inſeparable from the other affections; for, in order to be uſeful and ſublime, it muſt be conſtantly a beneficence abſolutely diſintereſted. How could a mother give way to jealouſy, when ſhe wiſhes to marry her daughter, and knows that one day that daughter will have children? How could ſhe have the folly to grieve at a ſhort abſence, when ſhe is certain that a huſband will take her daughter away from her, and for ever? She ought therefore to employ all her reaſon, if not to curb her affection, (Nature makes it unlimited,) at leaſt to regulate, purify, and diveſt it of all perſonal intereſt.

Some reaſoners, deſtitute of all reflection, repeat that a mother ought to be no more than her daughter's friend; it is by confounding all ideas that they weaken both principles and ſentiments. They rob maternal love of reaſon and diſintereſtedneſs, filial piety of veneration, and they

they profane friendſhip, by giving it all the weakneſſes of love. This is the reſult of the metaphyſical nonſenſe of our wits. Friendſhip alone requires a perfect equality and ſome conformity in age and inclination. A mother is a guardian angel, a vigilant guide, ever ſacrificing the pleaſure of pleaſing to the happineſs or the hope of being uſeful. And, in like manner, filial piety cannot, without diſadvantage, be compared either to ſimple friendſhip or to any other attachment; it is a veneration founded on the moſt juſt gratitude; it is a ſentiment defined by its very name, the moſt noble, the moſt endearing, with which we can honour a human affection, ſince we have no other to expreſs the love that we owe to the Creator.

The daughter, the beſt educated, will frequently prefer the company of a female friend of her own age to that of her mother; and notwithſtanding this, ſhe will

love

love her mother better than her young friend; ſometimes ſhe will entruſt to perſons indifferent to her what ſhe will conceal from her mother; where is the being who, in the courſe of his life, never fears the auſtere advice of reaſon and experience? If we are deficient in indulgence for all theſe faults, we are unjuſt; they are inevitable, and, at leaſt in general, they by no means prove the want of affection and gratitude. If the deſire of pleaſing and of gaining all confidence, induces a mother to conceal uſeful truths, to ſuppreſs neceſſary advice, ſhe will forfeit the eſteem of her daughter; and *young female friends* will always be preferred to her on a thouſand occaſions. For a mother to be happy, ſhe muſt have no ſuſceptibility, and ſhe muſt, to an exceſſive indulgence, join an extreme firmneſs, ever exhibit truth without diſguiſe, and be ever ready to forgive. To her children, ſhe ought

to

to repreſent on earth the auguſt image of the divinity.

I have a right, dear Pauline, to draw you the portrait of a good mother; but if I wiſhed to draw that of the moſt affectionate and moſt perfect of daughters in every point of view, it is you that I would take for a model. O! may your adopted child be to you what you have conſtantly been to me! Heaven owes you this recompenſe; God is juſt, he will grant it you. But moderate your ſenſibility. My child, I cannot have any indulgence for an infatuation which makes you fall away, and your beautiful colour fade. Let me know that you ſleep, that you eat, and acquire a degree of *embonpoint*; I *forgive* you only on this condition.

LETTER XXI.

From the COUNTESS D'OLBREUSE *to the* MARCHIONESS.

St. Maudé, November 22.

YES, my dear friend, Léocadie adheres to a *good regimen*; ſhe does not breakfaſt *every day on coffee with cream*; ſhe does not drink *tea every evening*; ſhe lives exactly as if ſhe was under your own eyes, and, were I even to wiſh to *corrupt* her in this reſpect, I ſhould not ſucceed. Nothing will ever prevent her from following your advice; to obey you is with her not only a duty, but it is alſo a happineſs.

She walks out every morning for an hour and a half, in the wood of Vincennes. A gate of my garden opens into this wood.

We

We go to maſs every Sunday and feſtival to the caſtle of Vincennes, on foot when the weather is fine, or elſe in a carriage. Twice or thrice a week we make excurſions to Paris, in order to view the curioſities there; we have already ſeen ſeveral churches, the Louvre, the Invalids, the palaces of the Princes, the King's cabinet and library, the obſervatory, a few private collections, and three manufactories.

Léocadie keeps a detailed journal which is *dedicated* to you; ſhe thinks and ſpeaks only of you; and I aſſure you that you *guide* and *inſpire* her juſt the ſame as if ſhe inhabited Erneville-caſtle. She draws, ſhe reads, ſhe plays on different inſtruments, and cultivates all her charming talents with the greateſt application.

I took her yeſterday to the Dutcheſs de ***'s, who ſaw her again with inexpreſſible pleaſure. The Princeſs was alone, and received us in her own room; we ſtaid there

there but an hour: this time appeared to us very ſhort, becauſe we talked only of you and of Erneville. The Dutcheſs de *** abſolutely inſiſts on giving a little ball to Léocadie; there will be but four and twenty ladies and as many gentlemen to dance: it will begin at five o'clock, and be over *at ten preciſely*.

But Léocadie will not poſitively engage herſelf till ſhe knows whether you approve of her accepting the invitation. She writes to you on this ſubject merely to aſk you for your orders, and I warmly ſolicit permiſſion, which I flatter myſelf you will not have the cruelty to refuſe.

I ſhall, as we agreed, take Léocadie but *ſix times* to public places; once only to the opera, and five times to the *Comédie Françoiſe*. She ſhall ſee the repreſentation of *Cinna*, *Andromaque*, *Athalie*, *le Miſanthrope*, and *la Métromanie*. In ſhort, every thing that you have preſcribed is and will

will be followed with the moſt ſcrupulous punctuality.

It is almoſt needleſs to tell you that every one who ſees or ſpeaks to Léocadie is charmed with her; are you not very ſure of this? Your heart foretells you all the admiration which ſhe gains, but which it cannot exaggerate to you: ſhe is a bewitching creature!

We are at length rid of young Celtas. After having, for ten years, deranged his fortune by play and with courteſans, he drew ſome bills of exchange, but not paying them when due, he was arreſted, and put into the priſon of *Fort l'Evéque*. My brother-in-law took him out, and haſtened to make him ſet off again for his province, whither this unfortunate young man is returning with enormous debts, morals entirely corrupted, his health ruined, and his reputation gone. Such is the fruit that he has gathered from *his reading!*

Talk

Talk to me of yourſelf, my dear friend, and of every thing that is going on at Erneville. Some details, I beg, on the *youthful loves* of Maurice and Zéphyrine. Theſe ingenuous lovers preſented a picture quite new to me. Their gaiety, candour, and playfulneſs, repreſent love ſuch as it is, that is to ſay, a ſuperficial ſentiment which amuſes more than it occupies. Here, this is not what we wiſh to believe; ſuch a ſentiment would not be an excuſe for any great folly, and we want *excuſes*: therefore we have made of love a paſſion not only *ſerious*, but *terrible* and *abſolutely invincible*; and as it is ſeldom lawful among us, it is always accompanied by *myſtery*, and every things that reveals it, even when it is innocent, appears in our eyes an indecency, or at leaſt a ſpecimen of *bad taſte*. This is the reaſon why I laughed when Zéphyrine, on coming into the drawing-room, always ſaid: "*Where is Maurice?*" when ſhe

ſhe did not ſee him, or called him as ſoon as ſhe perceived him. Here, it is quite the contrary. It is an exceſſive reſerve that betrays lovers. As ſoon as they are agreed, they no longer look at each other; they meet without coming near each other; and, in company, the man in love is always he that the woman, by whom he is loved, ſees the firſt, and takes notice of the laſt.

Adieu, my dear friend; in a month I ſhall come and reſtore to you the *treaſure* with which you have entruſted me, and I am delighted to think that I ſhall have the happineſs of again paſſing a few days with you this year.

LETTER XXII.

From COUNT JULES *to the* COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

Paris, November 13.

O! Providence!.... ſhe is near Paris! at St. Mandé! at Madame d'Olbreuſe's! .... Heaven rewards me for having ſo courageouſly withſtood the temptation of going to Erneville!.... I have ſeen her again, I have ſpoken to her, I have heard her ſweet voice!

On Saturday I learnt that ſhe walked in the wood of Vincennes; on Sunday I went thither; I was on horſeback... it rained, and I was growing diſconſolate, when I perceived a coach, and recognized the

livery of Madame d'Olbreuſe; I flew to the carriage; ſhe was with Léocadie! ... The latter, on perceiving me, ſtarted; and I ſtammered out ſome complaints to Madame d'Olbreuſe about her door being ſhut againſt me for this laſt fortnight. She anſwered me that, as long as ſhe ſhould remain at St. Mandé, ſhe ſhould ſee no one; "but," added ſhe ſmiling, "I give you leave to come with us to "maſs in the chapel of the caſtle." I accepted this propoſal with tranſport, and there was I eſcorting the carriage, and *capering* by the ſide of it. Léocadie looked at my horſe with a ſort of terror, and told me that ſhe hoped this was not *the vile horſe* that I rode, on the day when *I killed* the mad wolf. I anſwered that it was the ſame, and that, ſince that accident, I loved him the better, becauſe he had procured me the happineſs of ſeeing again Madame d'Erneville and of being taken care of by her. On this, Léocadie related

related to Madame d'Olbreuſe all the ravages committed at Erneville and in the environs, by this furious beaſt; and I dare flatter myſelf that, in order to enhance my exploit, ſhe exaggerated not a little.

Being arrived at the caſtle, I gave my arm to Madame d'Olbreuſe and to Léoadie; in the chapel I placed myſelf beſide the latter; but ſhe conſtantly kept her eyes on her prayer-book; ſhe was really an angel invoking God!.... A print of a Saint fell out of her book; I picked it up, and, on giving it to her, I ſaid in a whiſper: "*O! pray for me!*" — "Ah!" rejoined ſhe, "every day for theſe four "months!"—Oh! what charms the heavenly innocence of her look gave to the affecting ingenuouſneſs of this anſwer. *Every day*, ſaid ſhe, and I do not doubt it. So, ſhe has not, ſince our firſt interview, paſſed a ſingle day without thinking of me! What a ſweet idea! After maſs, I eſcorted her back to the door of the houſe,

houſe, the happy houſe which ſhe inhabits .... and which Madame d'Olbreuſe has taken for only three months. When Léocadie returns into Burgundy I will take this houſe; I am determined to live in it too, were it but for a fortnight.

What! my dear aunt, you will not return from La M** till the month of January, and, from this time to that, you poſitively forbid me to make an excurſion in order to come and ſee you! I own to you that, if Léocadie was not here, obedience, on this occaſion, would be ſtill more painful to me; but, believe me, my adorable friend, nothing can make me amends for the happineſs of ſeeing you, liſtening to you, and converſing with you.

LETTER XXIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Paris, December 9.

CONCEIVE, if poſſible, an idea of my rapture! .... I have danced with her! .... at an afternoon-ball at the Dutcheſs de ***'s. I paſſed five hours with her! ... May love puniſh me if ever, in the whole courſe of my life, I dance with another woman the minuet *de la cour*, and the *coſaque*, which I danced with Léocadie! She dances like you; ſhe was beautiful like you; ſhe had on a little , ſhe was *Venus Urania*. Every one was ſtruck with her reſemblance to you, a reſemblance, in fact, aſtoniſhing when ſhe

She eclipſed all the belles, no one was ſeen but her:

" *Tout Paris pour Chimène a les yeux de Rodrigue* * !"

The Dutcheſs de * * * had given her a charming dreſs; but what dreſs would not appear charming on ſuch a perſon!

In dancing, a ſmall row of pearls fell from her dreſs; I ſeized on it, unperceived by any one; afterwards, I aſked her leave to keep it. As ſhe heſitated to give me an anſwer, I added: " Ought *fraternal* " *friendſhip* to fear a refuſal?" — " Oh " no!" replied ſhe, and the tears ſtood in her beautiful eyes! . . . .

She left the ball-room at half paſt ten o'clock; I handed her to her carriage; and, on leaving her, I ſaid to her in a whiſper: " *Adieu, dearly beloved ſiſter!*"

* All Paris gazes on Chimène with the eyes of Rodrigue!

Ah! thank heaven! ſhe is not my ſiſter; you are certain of it! .... Great God, if you were miſtaken, I ſhould be the moſt criminal and moſt wretched of men!... This idea is horrible! Oh! repeat to me that ſhe is not my ſiſter! I can love none but her; all other young women are odious to me.

O! my only friend; remember that I cannot endure Aglaé de Juſſy, and that I adore Léocadie.

LETTER XXIV.

From LÉOCADIE *to the* MARCHIONESS.

Saint Mandé, December 11.

My dear mamma, I have this moment received the letter in which, by granting me leave to ſtay here a fortnight longer, you are ſo good as to promiſe me not to ſpeak to any one whatever (not even to my papa and to my grand-mamma) of the ſecret which I wiſh to reveal to you. Your character, dear mamma, leaves perſons who require this diſcretion no ſort of doubt reſpecting the inviolability of your promiſe. But we were afraid of entruſting this ſecret to the poſt, and I have reſolved to ſend you back La France, for

whom I have not the ſmalleſt occaſion, in order that he may deliver this letter into your own hands; for I can no longer defer opening my heart to you; and, as I am not to ſee you for theſe five weeks, I cannot any more endure the cruel idea that I ſuppoſe you to entertain in regard to this journey. O! my benefactreſs! my affectionate mother! never ſhould I have conſented to go from you, had I not been compelled to it by the deareſt and moſt ſacred of duties! A letter from my mother enjoined me to ſet out, if you gave your conſent!.... Now I ſhall tell you every thing, ſince I am permitted.

On the evening of my arrival in this houſe, Madame d'Olbreuſe conducted me into the apartments that were intended for me; they conſiſt of a charming room and two cabinets, in one of which I found a harp, a piano-forte, a box of colours, a writing-deſk, ſome books, and a moſs-roſe tree as beautiful as in the middle of ſummer!

mer!.... I was very much affected; but Madame d'Olbreuſe ſaid nothing to me, and I durſt not queſtion her. I remarked that, in this room, there were only two beds of the ſame ſize, placed in a large alcove or receſs. I aſked where Jacinthe was to ſleep? "At the other end of the "houſe," replied Madame d'Olbreuſe; "but," continued ſhe, "a woman, on "whom I can depend, will ſleep near you "in one of theſe two beds."..... At theſe words I experienced a violent palpitation of the heart!..... However, Madame d'Olbreuſe talking immediately of ſomething elſe with a very natural air, I imagined that I was miſtaken, and I ſaid no more. We again went down in the drawing-room. It was eight o'clock; ſupper was kept back for the Count d'Olbreuſe, whom, in our way through Paris, we had left in the *Rue de Richelieu*. He had ſaid that he would be at St. Mandé by eight o'clock, and that he would bring with him Ma-

dame d'Olbreuſe's ſiſter and ſiſter-in-law, who would ſpend a few days with us. At a quarter paſt eight we heard the noiſe of a carriage. I became confuſed, without knowing why..... A moment after, the Count d'Olbreuſe appeared arm-in-arm with two ladies; they both wore hats, the black lace of which being let down concealed their faces..... "Here," ſaid Madame d'Olbreuſe, "are my ſiſter and "my ſiſter-in-law."..... My eyes were fixed on the talleſt of theſe two women; ſhe ſtood ſtill, liſted up the lace of her hat, and diſcovered a face of a dazzling beauty. She looked at me!.... Ah! what a look! it ſpoke to me! it told me all! I flew into her arms! that look and my own heart could not deceive me!.... It was, in fact, my mother!.... We were left by ourſelves till ten o'clock!.... Ah! what a delightful evening! Alas! notwithſtanding the exceſs of my joy, my heart was not fully ſatisfied. The ſweeteſt

and

and moſt tender affections doubled for me, never procure me but an imperfect happineſs, blended with painful recollections. In your arms I have wept my mother's abſence, and in hers, I regret you!.... How can the one make me forget the other?... In both, I find the ſame virtue, the ſame ſentiments!.... The affection, attentions, and favours of my mother every moment retrace to me all that you have done for me; and my gratitude towards her is the pledge of that which I feel towards you!..... Oh! ſhall I never enjoy the ſupreme felicity of being between you both, and of receiving at once the ſweet careſſes of two objects ſo perfectly, ſo equally loved?....

How pleaſing it was to me to ſup by the ſide of my mother! We ate but little; we were both wholly taken up with looking at each other.....Ah! how beautiful ſhe is! how majeſtic, ſtriking, and perfect is her figure!

After ſupper, ſhe took me into my own room, where ſhe has conſtantly ſlept. She choſe the bed that touches the wainſcot; ſhe always gets up before me, and, for this purpoſe, ſhe opens ſoftly a ſmall door made in the wainſcot, and leading into another room which is hers. Every night, after a delightful converſation, I fall aſleep holding my mother by the hand. It is ſhe who alone comes into my room in the morning; it is her beloved voice that calls and wakes me; it is ſhe who dreſſes me; it is with her, it is on my knees, beſide her, that I ſay my prayers. .... We then breakfaſt *tête-à-tête*..... After that, I go and take a walk; ſhe does not accompany me; ſhe is here in private, and does not ſtir out. After my walk, I fly into my cabinet, where I am ſure to find her again; we read Bourdaloue's ſermons; and, afterwards, ſhe makes me draw and play on the harp; ſhe is an excellent muſician; ſhe plays in a ſuperior

ſtyle

ſtyle on the piano-forte, and ſings divinely. You know, dear mamma, how well ſhe paints; ſo, like you, ſhe ſerves me in lieu of every maſter. After dinner, we remain till ſix o'clock with Madame d'Olbreuſe and the other lady, my mother's friend, who is called Coralie; we embroider, and we read tragedies; my mother declaims in perfection, and makes me read verſes every day. At ſix o'clock, we go up ſtairs again to my cabinet; we read books of hiſtory, we divert ourſelves with muſic, we chat till ſupper-time, and we go to bed at eleven o'clock preciſely.

This is the life that I conſtantly lead when Madame d'Olbreuſe does not take me to Paris in the morning. Theſe excurſions, although intereſting, always give me pain, becauſe my mother does not accompany us; and, but for her poſitive orders, I would not have made a ſingle one. But now I have ſeen every thing

moſt curious in that immenſe city, and I ſhall ſtir no more from St. Mandé but to return to Erneville.

I ſtill remain in the ſame ignorance as to my mother's name and ſituation: I ſee her; I have no curioſity to know the reſt. I have never aſked her the ſmalleſt queſtion, even an indirect one, on this ſubject.

Theſe, dear mamma, are all my ſecrets; my mother has the greateſt intereſt in concealing her intimacy with Madame d'Olbreuſe; I cannot penetrate into the cauſe of this; but I ought to reſpect it, though I know it not; this is the reaſon why I could not, before I obtained her leave, tell you that I had the happineſs to meet her again in this place.

How much am I now relieved! you will know the motives of my conduct, and you will applaud your child.

Adieu,

Adieu, dear and affectionate mother! Alas! I cannot but grieve at your abſence; I cannot but regret Erneville, that abode ſo dear to my heart! .... I am neither allowed, nor is it poſſible for me to give way to the impatience of returning thither; to be there I muſt quit St. Mandé, and tear myſelf from the arms of an adored mother, without knowing when I ſhall ſee her again! .... Ah! I feel that my heart is divided between you two, only when I muſt part from the one, in order to join the other! ....

LETTER XXV.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

January 18.

SHE is arrived! ſhe is reſtored to me! ..... From the anxiety with which you ſaw me oppreſſed, you can, my dear friend, judge of my joy and happineſs! How I love Madame d'Olbreuſe who has taken ſo much care of her! .... My dear Léocadie! .... I think her grown taller and handſomer. How endearing ſhe has been towards me! .... Oh! come, my friend, come to-morrow and dine with us. I wiſh to procure you a great pleaſure, that of ſeeing me perfectly happy.

LETTER XXVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

May 2.

ALBERT ſet out yeſterday for Lyons, with Maurice and Stephen. He ſaid that he ſhould return in three weeks; but I ſuſpect that he will make a longer journey, and that he may probably go to Geneva. What a fondneſs he has taken for travelling! ....

My brother-in-law and his wife have paſſed two days here, and are juſt gone. My ſiſter-in-law is really inſupportable with Zéphyrine; ſhe ſnubs and ſcolds her without reaſon, and ſeeks every opportunity of mortifying her, and ſaying unpleaſant things to her. Yeſterday Mademoiſelle du Rocher ſent Zéphyrine the yolk of an egg beat up in water; Zéphyrine,

ine, who had a cold, thought that it was a *lait de poule* *, and ſwallowed it; by no means, it was a coſmetic for *clearing the complexion*. This morning Zéphyrine went into Mademoiſelle du Rocher's room, where ſhe found ſome ſtrawberries, and ate them; and theſe ſtrawberries, according to Mademoiſelle du Rocher's old cuſtom, were prepared for waſhing her hands. In ſhort, Zéphyrine, eating all Mademoiſelle du Rocher's receipts for beauty, alſo ſwallowed ſome ſweet almonds, and drank a glaſs of *rice-water*. Would you believe that Madame d'Orgeval, for theſe heavy crimes, took Zéphyrine publicly to taſk in the moſt ſerious and moſt violent manner! ſhe who, in all her youthful days, ſo frequently ridiculed Mademoiſelle du Rocher's coſmetics! .... Oh! what an unnatural and diſguſting creature is a bad mother!

* A *lait de poule* is one of the many French recipes for a cold; it is nothing more than the yolk of an egg, beat up with a little ſugar.—*Tranſlator.*

Adieu,

Adieu, my friend; let me know whether we ſhall ſee you at Bourbon on Saturday.

LETTER XXVII.

From the BARONESS *to the* MARCHIONESS.

May 12.

I HAVE, my friend, been told a ſecret which concerns you, and I have choſen to undertake to reveal it to you. Here it is. Monſieur du Reſnel is determined to ſettle all his fortune on Léocadie, that is to ſay, *two hundred thouſand livres a year*, and an immenſe moveable property. I do not think that you have a right to play the generous lady on this occaſion, and this is my opinion. Léocadie is not your daughter; ſhe has nothing; it is out of your power to give her a portion that can procure her an advantageous marriage; your property

property belongs to your children, and you can only ſettle an annuity on this adopted and beloved daughter; there would, therefore, be unreaſonableneſs and injuſtice in refuſing for her an immenſe fortune which makes her one of the richeſt matches in France. On this ſubject you have no one to conſult; Léocadie lawfully depends only on you; an *anonymous, unknown, veiled* mother is nothing in this buſineſs; it is for you alone to determine, and, were I in your place, I would immediately accept the offer without heſitation: this to you is a duty. Then..... (Ah! Pauline! I am going to demonſtrate to you how far I am ſure of your innocence!) then I would ſay to my huſband: "I "begged you, ten years ago, not to enter "into any poſitive engagement in regard "to your ſon; now, that Léocadie is ſix-"teen, that ſhe, in the eyes of every one, "is the moſt lovely girl exiſting, and is be-"come a rich heireſs, I offer her to you

"for

"for Maurice!".... Then Pauline is juſtified; ſhe recovers all her reputation, while ſhe enſures the happineſs of her children!

O! my friend, do not heſitate! If, through falſe delicacy, you ſhould waver, you would dreadfully afflict friendſhip! Reflect maturely on this; Providence at length affords you a certain method of juſtifying yourſelf: not to avail yourſelf of it would be a culpable and incomprehenſible piece of folly. I confeſs to you, if any thing could ſhake my eſteem for you, it would be to find you had, on this point, a way of thinking different from mine. Do not oppoſe to this project the *mutual inclination* of Maurice and Zéphyrine. The latter is but fourteen; can it be imagined that the ſort of ſentiment which ſhe has, is a real paſſion? And as for Maurice, is it poſſible to believe ſincerely that a young man of eighteen can feel a repugnance to marry Léocadie?

Monſieur

Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval will be exaſperated at this marriage; but, in truth, I ſee no great harm in that; they have always envied and calumniated you. Madame d'Orgeval is a bad mother, who will grieve at this event only through ambition and vanity, and becauſe it juſtifies you: in ſhort, no poſitive promiſe has ever been given them; therefore, nothing ought to ſtop you, abſolutely nothing. Pray decide quickly, and anſwer me. The Baron is ſtill in as much pain as ever; I cannot quit him an inſtant. Ah! why am I not allowed to fly to you! What would I not give for an hour's converſation! Anſwer me, dear Pauline; conſider that I expect Simon this evening; ſend him back to me. A *yes* is ſoon written; and this is all that you have to ſay, if you conſult only reaſon, honour, and your own heart.

LETTER XXVIII.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer.*

May 12.

YES, my perfect friend, I yield to your reaſons; I feel all the ſtrength and juſtneſs of them; I accept the favours of Monſieur du Reſnel, and I am going to diſpatch a ſpecial meſſenger to Lyons, in order to conjure Albert to unite Maurice and Léocadie for ever, by an indiſſoluble tie, in leſs than ſix weeks. Are you ſatisfied? *Is this clear?*

I cannot expreſs to you all that I feel. Moſt aſſuredly I am happy! I owe every thing to friendſhip; I ſhall be juſtified, and Léocadie will be really my daughter! But what happineſs is without alloy! Maurice will marry Léocadie without tranſport, without adoring her; Léocadie will grieve to break the union of two perſons who

who love each other and are dear to her; ſhe will feel warmly the diſappointment of Zéphyrine; and ſhe will even fancy it more violent than it can be! Zéphyrine's ſituation alſo affects me; as ſhe is not to marry Maurice, ſhe will make but a bad match, or will not be married at all; for her parents will make but a ſtrange choice for her! They will neither conſult her taſte nor perhaps even propriety: in ſhort, they will take her away from me, and what will become of her in the hands of ſuch a mother? .... I will likewiſe own to you, that the concern of my brother-in-law and his wife, on this occaſion, will give a great deal to me, becauſe it will be but too well founded! .... Many other things too afflict me!

Here are my projects (not calling in queſtion Albert's conſent): I ſhall marry my children towards the end of June or in the beginning of July; as they are too young to live together, we will make

Maurice

Maurice travel for two years. I ſhall aſk to keep Zéphyrine all that time; and, when the firſt impulſe of anger has ſubſided, I flatter myſelf that I ſhall obtain my requeſt. On Maurice's return, we will ſend Zéphyrine to Dijon to my mother, who will take charge of her with pleaſure; Albert will willingly conſent to enter into an engagement to give to this little girl, when ſhe marries, a complete ſtock of wearing apparel and houſehold linen, to defray all the expenſes of the wedding, and to ſettle on her an annuity of four thouſand livres for life; with all this, and the aſſurance of the property of her parents, whoſe only daughter ſhe is, ſhe will certainly make an excellent marriage.

I will not detain Simon any longer. Adieu, beſt and moſt tenderly beloved of friends.

I write to Monſieur du Reſnel; I hope that he will come to-morrow to receive in perſon all my thanks.

LETTER XXIX.

From the ſame to the MARQUIS.

May 13.

I SEND you, my friend, by an expreſs, a letter from Madame de Vordac which will inform you of the motive of this meſſage. I am, in this affair, entirely of the opinion of my excellent friend; therefore I offer you Léocadie for our ſon. This marriage has long been the object of my moſt ardent wiſhes. Here is the explanation of my conduct on this ſubject:

In Léocadie's early infancy I could not reaſonably propoſe her to you for Maurice: to form the project of giving to my ſon for a wife, a *foundling*, was to ſacrifice maternal love to the adopted child; it was

to

to fail eſſentially in my duty. Beſides, Léocadie was not yet five years old, when you haſtened to confide to me your views in regard to little Zéphyrine. This project of marriage was, in fact, very ſuitable; I merely made anſwer that I requeſted you, as a favour, not to enter into any poſitive engagement till Maurice had attained his twentieth year; this you promiſed me. A few years after, you deſired that Zéphyrine might be brought up under your own roof; then you ſeemed to attach yourſelf fondly to her, and you repeated to me with a marked affection, that her marriage with Maurice *would conſtitute the happineſs of your life.* In ſhort, you gave, in my preſence, this hope to your brother, and you have neglected nothing to perſuade Maurice that he was in love with this girl!.... Shall I add too what has ſo frequently pierced me to the heart?.... The extreme averſion which, eſpecially within theſe two years, you betray to Léocadie.

ocadie.... and which her innocence, her ſweetneſs, her reſpect and her attachment for you cannot get the better of? Shall I recall to your mind that the day when Madame d'Olbreuſe, out of pleaſantry, dreſſed her up in her gala ſuit, put her on *rouge*, and brought her in this manner to us in the drawing-room, and that this little girl ran up to you with open arms, you puſhed her back with a degree of rudeneſs at which ſhe was terrified, and you haſtily left the room!.... Ah! I cannot believe that this angel can inſpire you with averſion; this behaviour, I know, proceeds only from your cruel prepoſſeſſions: but could I propoſe to you to prefer for Maurice, to a very good match, to an amiable and pretty girl who is dear to you, and who is your niece, a poor ſtrange child of no family, of no fortune, and who appears to diſpleaſe you?

However, I conſtantly nouriſhed in ſecret a remnant of hope. Maurice is

but

but eighteen; you intended to make him travel; I flattered myſelf that, on his return, when twenty years old, he would have other eyes; or, to ſpeak more correctly, ſeeing then with his own, he would be aſtoniſhed at his former choice, and that his ſentiments would agree with mine.

There is the explanation which I owe to you; now let us bury the paſt in eternal oblivion .... I have, at length, been able to baniſh from my memory the recollection of the fleeting and delightful days of my early youth! .... believe me, it will coſt me much leſs to forget the laſt ſixteen years of my life!

LETTER XXXI.

The MARQUIS's *Anſwer.*

Lyons, May 16.

AH! Pauline! is it really true? Do you ſincerely wiſh to give Léocadie, for a wife, to your ſon? .... But, great God! can Madame de Vordac's letter, that letter which you ſend me, and your own, leave me the ſmalleſt doubt in this reſpect? .... Yes, I conſent to this union which anſwers every purpoſe, which juſtifies you, and which leaves *only one culprit* who will ever be inconſolable.

I will not move your compaſſion: for this long time paſt, I have been juſtly baniſhed from your heart; I have no hope

of

of pardon, I do myſelf juſtice; believe me, Pauline, this is being ſufficiently revenged.

I will at length explain to you, without any ſubterfuge, a conduct which appears to you ſtrange; but which, according to my ideas, was very conſiſtent.

Since Madame du Reſnel's recantation, I have reſumed all the ſuſpicions which were ſo injurious to you, and every year has ſerved only to ſtrengthen them!.... I perſuaded myſelf that having done, or ſuffered to be done, ſo many extraordinary things for the purpoſe of your juſtification, you would be very much embarraſſed at not being able to give me an unqueſtionable proof of your innocence, by propoſing to me the marriage of Maurice and Léocadie. I wiſhed to ſpare you this embarraſſment. This is the reaſon why I have ſhewn ſo much fondneſs, ſo much preference for my niece; and why I have employed every means to inſpire Maurice

with the ſame deſire. When you requeſted me not to enter into an engagement, I conſidered this requeſt only as a little artifice. However, in order ſtill to conduct myſelf with candour, I made you the promiſe which you required; indeed, I have not given my word to my brother; but I have ſaid and repeated to all my friends that I was irrevocably *decided* on marrying my ſon to my niece.

A circumſtance which greatly contributed to confirm me in my ſuſpicions, was that St. Méran, who is much more your friend than mine, and the boſom-friend of the man that, of all others, is the moſt devoted to you, when I ſpoke to him of my intentions reſpecting Zéphyrine, approved of them very much, and even adviſed me, more than once, not to wait till Maurice was twenty years old to marry him, at the ſame time ſupporting this advice with very frivolous reaſons. Zéphyrine is dear to me; but I never compared

pared her in my mind to Léocadie..... I, an averſion to the latter!..... The contradiction, which you thought you remarked in me in regard to her, is only in my deſtiny, and not in my ſentiments!.... In ſhort, I adopt Zéphyrine for my daughter, and I accept Léocadie for my daughter-in-law. I could wiſh it were in my power to refuſe the gift of Monſieur du Reſnel; I ſhould like Léocadie much better without any fortune; but my refuſal, in this reſpect, would be only a vain diſplay of generoſity; ſince if I did not accept the ſettlement of the fortune by the contract of marriage, Monſieur du Reſnel would not fail to make it in his will, which would amount to the ſame thing. Therefore, I accept, without any reſtriction, all the offers contained in your letter; I have already ſpoken to my ſon; he conſents to every thing; and, by this very meſſenger, I ſhall write to my brother, in order to announce to him this arrangement, and

to tell him that I take on myſelf the eſtabliſhment of Zéphyrine.

But, after ſo much ado, if there ſhould occur *obſtacles* that might obſtruct this marriage, without my being in fault or even my ſon, I aſk you yourſelf, what could I then think? .... Should I not have a right to ſuppoſe myſelf ſhamefully trifled with, and without any neceſſity?

I ſend you an expreſs, and I ſhall myſelf ſet out at break of day; this letter will precede me only a few hours.

LETTER XXXII.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* BARONESS.

Erneville caſtle, May 18.

AN expreſs has juſt brought me the Marquis's anſwer. He conſents to every thing. Pauline did not ſhew me his letter, and ſhe was very painfully affected on reading it; who can divine what this letter contained? For theſe laſt four or five years, the Marquis has become ſo whimſical, that, in a thouſand reſpects, his conduct is inexplicable. In ſhort, this marriage is now certain. The *angel* will be *juſtified!* we ſhall be happy and triumphant! This is the hope that has conſoled me ſince the death of Madame du Reſnel.

Pauline was *too young* then, for it to be in my power to ſpeak; and it was neceſſary to wait both till time had ſanctified my ſentiments for her, and till Léocadie was quite grown up: in ſix weeks Léocadie will be Maurice's wife! Repreſent to yourſelf the rage, the aſtoniſhment, and the confuſion of the enviers and calumniators!

Léocadie is apprized of the circumſtance; ſhe wept a great deal; this is quite natural; we have told her all that would be done for Zéphyrine, ſhe is ſubmiſſive and grateful. Adieu, Madam, I ſhall write to you again when the Marquis and Maurice are arrived. Send us word how the Baron is.

LETTER XXXIII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

May 22.

THE great day, the moſt intereſting day of my life is drawing near, and fixed; Léocadie is to marry Maurice on the 25th of next month. The ceremony will take place in the caſtle without pomp and without ſhow, and afterwards we ſhall all ſet out for Dijon; for my mother will not come hither; ſhe cannot quit her female friend, who is ill, and inconſolable for the loſs of an only ſon. In the month of Auguſt, Maurice will will ſet out for Italy with Monſieur Remi and Sauval; and I believe alſo with his father!.... I ſhall

ſpend three months at Dijon; and then I ſhall return hither with my dearly-beloved Léocadie, who will bear the name of *d'Erneville*. Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval have conducted themſelves in the moſt extravagant manner: on receiving d'Albert's letter, they immediately ſent for their daughter by a *femme-de-chambre*, which produced, between Zéphyrine, Léocadie, and me, a painful ſcene that has done me much harm. In all this, Zéphyrine diſplayed the greateſt good-nature, and feelings the moſt affecting and moſt generous. Madame d'Orgeval has written me a letter equally fooliſh and inſulting; ſhe there accuſes me of having *given birth* to Zéphyrine's paſſion for Maurice; ſhe aſſures me that I ſhall never *drive it out of any one's head* that Léocadie is my daughter, and that all the world will be convinced that the *allurement of two hundred thouſand livres a year has made me get the better of every ſcruple*.

There-

Therefore, ſhe is perſuaded that I am going to marry my daughter to my ſon. Can you conceive that people can dare to utter ſuch atrocities? Reflection, and afterwards Albert's offers for Zéphyrine, have extremely moderated theſe firſt fits of rage. Monſieur d'Orgeval wrote yeſterday to his brother a very ſtupid letter, but which is not impertinent, and in which it is clearly to be ſeen that he will accept all our offers, if we renew them; this we have done already.

Ah! my dear friend, under what melancholy auſpices will this marriage take place? ..... Every one is diſſatisfied. Maurice ſpoke to me rationally; he renders every juſtice to Léocadie; he thinks her an incomparable girl; but he adds, that having always conſidered her as his ſiſter, he cannot get the better of a ſort of repugnance which the idea of marrying her makes him feel, notwithſtanding his admiration and tender regard. In ſhort,

he

he owns that he regrets Zéphyrine, and is grieved when he thinks that the ſentiment which ſhe has for him will, at leaſt for a long time, make her unhappy. Léocadie is low-ſpirited, does not open her lips, and is continually weeping; Albert is ſullen and ſhy; he is aſtoniſhed, without being affected at my juſtification..... his heart is irrevocably ſhut againſt me..... Every one about me is afflicted; can I avoid ſuffering?..... Monſieur du Reſnel ſupports my courage; he tells me that happineſs will revive, when all theſe firſt movements are over!..... Happineſs?..... No; never!..... Albert!..... Ah! how he is altered within theſe five years! Would you believe that he ſtill harbours ſome ſuſpicion? He talked to Monſieur du Reſnel this morning as if he was ſure that this marriage will not take place; he ſaid to him in an ironical tone: "*You will* "*ſee that ſome unforeſeen obſtacle will* "*occur!*"

"occur!" .... In ſhort, when the marriage is over, perhaps, that, then rid of all miſtruſt, he will again become what he ought to be.

Adieu, my friend; ah! why muſt we be ſeparated on ſuch an occaſion? ....

LETTER XXXIV.

From COUNT JULES *to the* COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

Moulins, May 13.

WHAT have I juſt learned! O! heaven, ſhe is going to be married! It is ſaid that Léocadie is, in a month, to receive the hand of the eldeſt ſon of the Marchioneſs d'Erneville! .... Ah! my dear aunt, what are become of your promiſes! Will they have ſerved only to give me chimerical

chimerical hopes for the eternal misfortune of my life!.... Have you any means to prevent this fatal marriage? Deign to anſwer me without any diſguiſe.... No; I will not ſuffer her to be torn from me. .... I am waiting for your anſwer: if it does not conſole me, I will no longer liſten to any thing but my deſpair..... No man on earth ſhall marry Léocadie, till after he has taken away my life!

LETTER XXXV.

From the MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Erneville caſtle, May 22.

WHAT a blow I ſhall give to your feeling heart! .... but there is no alternative. ....Ah! Madam, if you can ſteal away for a moment, come to the relief of your unfortunate female friend! .... She is in deſpair! .... never, no; never, at any time, was ſhe ſo much to be pitied!

This morning at ten o'clock, the Marquis, Pauline, and myſelf, were in the little gallery which looks on the parterre. All at once appeared Léocadie, bathed with tears, and holding in her hand an open letter; ſhe threw herſelf at the Marchioneſs's feet, ſobbing and ſaying: "*Read*, "*mamma*;

" *mamma* ; *this letter is from my mother.*" Pauline, with a trembling hand, took the paper that was preſented to her.... This fatal letter, in the ſame hand-writing as the others, contains theſe few words :

" My daughter, you cannot diſpoſe of " yourſelf without my conſent. I cannot " give it you for the marriage that is pro- " poſed to you. I am ſenſible how much " your benefactreſs honours you in deign- " ing to chooſe you for her ſon ; but a " powerful reaſon obſtructs this alliance ; " and I forbid you, in the name of my " affection, and of the ſacred rights of " nature, to think of it in future. You " may ſhew my letter."

The paper fell from Pauline's hands. .... The Marquis picked up the letter, read it aloud, and turning to me, " Did I " not foreſee," ſaid he to me in the bit- tereſt tone, " that *an obſtacle* would " occur."—" What ! Léocadie," exclaim- ed Pauline, " would you refuſe to marry

" my

" my ſon!"—" Ah! mamma," anſwered Léocadie, ſhedding a flood of tears, " ſhould I be worthy of your kindneſs, if " I were capable of diſobeying my mother, " and on ſuch an occaſion?"—" This is " enough," ſaid the Marquis with eyes in which fury was painted; " this is enough: " the meaſure is full; and I flatter myſelf " that this ſcene will at leaſt be the laſt of " the kind." ... Pauline, terrified, wiſhed to diſengage herſelf from the arms of Léocadie, who was ſtill on her knees; ſhe roſe to go out; but ſhe fell back in her chair, and was ready to ſink..... " She " is fainting!" exclaimed Léocadie in diſmay. The Marquis was moved; but ſeeing that Pauline's paleneſs was going off: " Hark'ee, Pauline," ſaid he, " every " thing muſt have a period; and, conſe- " quently, *indulgence* has its limits too. " Mine is exhauſted ..... expect it no " more!" In pronouncing theſe words, he went away..... Then the unfortunate

Pauline,

Pauline, caſting on me the moſt painful look: "Here then I am arrived at the "very ſummit of misfortune," ſaid ſhe to me; "Albert inſults me without mercy, "and Léocadie diſobeys me."..... To theſe words, Léocadie anſwered only by groans, which completely wrung Pauline's heart and mine; but, notwithſtanding the moſt frightful deſpair, this unhappy girl perſiſts in her refuſal, and nothing can overcome her reſiſtance in this reſpect. Since this cruel ſcene, Albert is ſhut up in his room. Pauline has alſo retired to hers, and has been in bed theſe two hours. She has ſent away Léocadie, who is in her cabinet, all in tears. No one has ſat down to table at dinner..... Judge, Madam, of all that I feel! you may well imagine that I have done every thing in my power to prevail on Léocadie to retract, but in vain..... Great God, what a change! ... Pauline has received her death-blow! ſhe will ſink under this laſt chagrin!....

Léocadie

Léocadie is no leſs to be pitied, you may believe me; I have read in her heart, and, notwithſtanding her obſtinacy which gives me no hopes, I muſt admit that it is impoſſible to have more gratitude and a ſenſibility more lively and more profound. She is in a ſituation worthy of pity.

We ſhall ſee to-morrow what the reflections of the night will have produced. I ſhall not ſend off this afflictive letter till I have ſeen Pauline and Léocadie in the morning.

Can you conceive the horrible and fatal caprice of this unknown mother! Is there a reaſon, or even a pretext, that candictate or colour the ingratitude and extravagance of ſuch a refuſal! .... This informs us that Léocadie has ſome ſecret means of correſpondence with her, and that ſhe had conſulted her reſpecting this marriage. You are well aware how much this diſcovery has hurt Pauline! ... Unfortunate

and intereſting woman! .... Ah! why have I known her! I have never been able to ſerve her; and my attachment, which is uſeleſs to her, is very fatal to me! ....

24th, ſix o'clock in the morning.

Pauline ſet out for Dijon two hours ago! .... I am overwhelmed! ... this is all that I can tell you. Ah! Madam, how wretched we are to love in this manner!

LETTER XXXVI.

From the MARCHIONESS *to* LÉOCADIE.

May 24, three o'clock in the morning.

I AM going to ſet out for Dijon, I have now but one refuge; that is, my mother's boſom!.... You have ruined me in Albert's eyes; you diſhonour me; you kill me; you force me to abandon for ever the abode which the recollection of my infancy and of yours rendered ſo dear to me!.....

To obey the unjuſt and tyrannical order of a mother who, from the moment of your birth, renounced all her rights over you, and who has forfeited them

them all, you plunge a dagger into my heart..... You reject my favours; you inſult my ſon and my huſband, and you rob me of my honour! ..... You ſhew a deference to the ſtrangeſt and moſt odious caprice, and you deſpiſe my ſolicitations! .....

Adieu, Léocadie; I forgive you, and I am going to regret you, to hide myſelf, and die far away from you!

LETTER XXXVII.

LÉOCADIE's *Anſwer.*

May 24, ſix o'clock in the morning.

No, mamma; no, diſpoſe of me, I am yours; I vow to obey you; I accept your favours. Forgive me!.... come back. I ſubmit.... I have juſt declared it publicly..... Oh! forgive me! and come back..... mother, come back or I ſhall die!...

LETTER XXXVIII.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* BARONESS.

May 24, four o'clock in the afternoon.

SHE is come back! every thing is made up, every thing is ſettled. But hearken to the account of a new incident, more ſtrange than all the reſt.

Pauline, on ſetting out, had written to Léocadie, and the latter, at length overcome, no longer heſitated..... She ſaw that the exiſtence and life of her benefactreſs were at ſtake; and ſhe ſubmitted without any reſtriction. She ſent forward, on the road to Dijon, a courier charged with a letter; he overtook the Marchioneſs, who

who immediately turned back .... Léocadie, after having written to the Marquis, and to Maurice, to implore his pardon, and proteſt that ſhe acknowledges, on this occaſion, no other authority than Pauline's, came to me; and we ſet out together on the high road to meet the Marchioneſs. We did not walk, we flew! .... At the expiration of an hour, we perceived the carriage coming full ſpeed! Ah! certainly it did not travel at this rate on going away from Erneville, as the courier overtook it ſo ſoon! Léocadie, on ſeeing the carriage, gave a ſcream, quickened her ſteps, and trembled to ſuch a degree that I was obliged to ſupport her, and almoſt to carry her..... At length, when the carriage was not more than two hundred paces from us, I called out: "*Stop!*" Léocadie fell on her knees. The Marchioneſs herſelf opened the door, ſprang out of the carriage, and threw her arms round Léocadie! .... They both melted into tears:

"You are then reſtored to me!" repeated Pauline.—"Yes, mamma!" exclaimed Léocadie, "I am your work, I am your "property, I belong to no one but you." —We got into the carriage, and arrived at the caſtle; we aſked for Albert, and Pauline was told that he was waiting for her in his cabinet. She went thither alone. A quarter of an hour after, I was ſent for; and I accordingly went. I found the Marquis dull and thoughtful, but horribly altered; it is evident that he has ſuffered prodigiouſly, and has wept a great deal..... As for Pauline, ſhe appeared agitated, but ſatisfied. "Well," ſaid ſhe to me, "I am now of Albert's "opinion; this pretended unknown mo- "ther is no more than a monſter, a mortal "enemy who conceals herſelf in order to "calumniate me and ruin my character. "I am convinced that all the ſcenes by "which Léocadie and myſelf have been "duped, are only impoſtures. This

"morning

" morning Albert received a note in the " ſame hand-writing, and with the ſame " ſeal which we know ſo well. Read it!" ... I took this note; judge of my horror and ſurpriſe on reading what follows:

" Beware of forming this execrable al- " liance! Léocadie is the ſiſter of Mau- " rice d'Erneville."

" Moſt aſſuredly," ſaid I to the Marquis, " it will not be imagined that Pau- " line is an accomplice in this new ſtra- " tagem. This proves indeed an infamous " impoſture, and, at the ſame time, that " Pauline was the victim of it, without " ever having been let into the ſecret."

" In ſhort," rejoined Albert, looking ſtedfaſtly at Pauline, " you perſiſt in wiſh- " ing for the marriage of Maurice and " Léocadie?"—" Yes," anſwered Pauline with energy; " yes; and I even requeſt " you to fix an earlier day for it?" .... At theſe words, Albert became moved and ſoftened; he got up, and took a few

turns round the room, without breaking ſilence. He is very miſerable when he thinks Pauline guilty; he is now governed by fury when he thinks her innocent; he finds himſelf inexcuſable, and falls into a frightful depreſſion of ſpirits which contracts and withers his heart. It is decided that the marriage ſhall take place on the 12th of June. From this time to that, no notice will be taken to Léocadie of the abominable note which Albert has received. Pauline thinks, with reaſon, that Léocadie's prepoſſeſſions are too ſtrong for it to be poſſible to do them away at this moment; therefore we ſhall not begin to ſet her right, in this reſpect, till ſhe is married.

I haſten to ſend off this letter, which will be a balm to your ſick heart. Let us hope that time will unveil all this dark plot of perfidy and atrociouſneſs, and that heaven, after having juſtified innocence, will bring to light thoſe who are really guilty.

LETTER XXXIX.

From LÉOCADIE *to the unknown Mother.*

May 24, eleven o'clock at night.

EVERY one is gone to bed, and I cannot give myſelf up to ſleep; I have loſt my peace of mind for ever! I am kept awake by remorſe! an eternal remorſe! .... O! my mother! it is on my knees that I write to you! it is in ſhedding the bittereſt tears that I dare own I have diſobeyed you! I have given my word; I am to marry Maurice; the day is irrevocably fixed; this fatal marriage will take place on the 12th of June! .... I reſiſted for four and twenty hours; but, in ſhort, my *ſecond mother* was diſhonoured; ſhe was dying;

and I was obliged to yield! I was under the neceſſity of chooſing between two crimes frightful to my heart; it was my duty to prefer that which redeemed the honour of my benefactreſs, and reſtored her to life! .... Ah! never did gratitude obtain a more painful ſacrifice! .... For is it not ſacrificing myſelf to diſobey you?

My mother, my affectionate mother, to diſpleaſe you, to irritate you, is to me the greateſt of misfortunes. Ah! take pity on your unfortunate Léocadie; ſhe reveres you as much as ſhe loves you; ſhe deteſts an engagement which you do not approve; ſhe will go to the altar as a victim, and not as a diſobedient child! Oh! do not think that a ſecret ſentiment has influenced my conduct; I love Maurice as I ought to love the ſon of my benefactreſs; he has a thouſand engaging qualities; yet (I am going to open my whole ſoul to you) I do not love him even *like a brother!* No; this ſentiment ſo tender .... it is not he who

who inſpires me with it! .... In ſhort, I feel only an invincible averſion to the fatal tie that I am going to form. I ſhall be the more to be pitied; but I ſhall have the leſs remorſe on that account; I ſhould think myſelf more criminal if the union which you do not bleſs, pleaſed my heart. Alas! this heart conſecrated without reſerve to Nature, to gratitude, could not give way to other ſentiments! Filial duty is its ſole paſſion! And I cannot diſcharge its duties! .... Equally ſubmiſſive to two adored mothers, I could not give them the ſame proofs of affection and attachment; I was obliged to irritate the one, or drive the other to deſpair! Oh! will you deign to forgive me? I wait for your anſwer, trembling.... My mother! my tender-hearted mother! do not completely overwhelm your unfortunate Léocadie!

LETTER XL.

From the COUNTESS DE ROSMOND *to* COUNT JULES.

May 28.

AH! my dear Jules! I have a melancholy piece of news to communicate to you... You no longer have a father!..... My poor brother was ſtruck by an apoplectic fit yeſterday, at eight o'clock in the evening, as he was coming out of the King's cloſet!.... Every help has been uſeleſs!.... Bouvard had foretold him this frightful kind of death, if he perſiſted in not changing his way of life. Alas! my brother would not believe him! he was the cauſe of his own death..... I never quit your excellent mother; ſhe is in profound affliction;

affliction; but her health is as good as we could reaſonably deſire in her ſituation. She enjoins you to remain at Moulins; I ſhall come to you there immediately.

You ought to regret your father the more as, two days before his death, he gave you the moſt tender marks of affection! ... On the 26th, I ſpoke to him privately in preſence of your mother, and he conſented to *every thing*.

Adieu, my dear Jules; adieu my ſon! .... Make yourſelf eaſy reſpecting Léocadie's marriage; remain quietly at Moulins. I deſerve your confidence; grant it to me without reſerve.

LETTER XLI.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to the* DOWAGER MARCHIONESS *of* T***.

Autun, June 1.

MOST aſſuredly, Madam, I accept your invitation; and, dead or alive, I ſhall certainly be at T*** on the evening of the 7th. I ſhall, with as much intereſt as pleaſure, attend at the wedding of your grandſon. No, Madam; the entertainment at T*** will not be *eclipſed* by that at *Erneville*; pure and true gold is not effaced by the factitious luſtre of *tinſel*..... But, Madam, what do you ſay to all theſe great events? The financier du Reſnel not having been able to ſucceed in giving out his wife

wife as the *mother*, reſolves to declare himſelf *the father*; is not this very ingenious? In ſhort, who then is *the mother?* The marriage puzzles the ſimple and *prejudiced*; but *the freethinkers* maintain that the cuſtom of the *Guebres* and *Perſians* is very conformable to Nature! *And, beſides, three hundred thouſand livres a year* can annihilate many ſcruples! We ſhall then ſee Monſieur Maurice d'Erneville, the great grandſon of the keeper of a wine-vault, the richeſt *nobleman* in the province! ... Although I have great reaſon to complain of the d'Orgevals, reſentment does not render me unjuſt, and I am indignant at the behaviour that they have met with; I was witneſs to the word of honour, ſolemnly given on the occaſion of the projected marriage of little d'Orgeval with her couſin. Madame d'Orgeval is a very good mother; judge of the ſituation ſhe muſt be in! ſuch conduct is really infamous.

I know,

I know, from good authority, that Monſieur d'Erneville carried his inſults ſo far as to propoſe his little baſtard Stephen, *in the room* of his ſon Maurice; do you know any thing more ſhocking than this?

Adieu, Madam; receive with kindneſs the reſpectful homage of a ſincere admirer and the moſt devoted of your friends.

LETTER XLII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

June 8.

I HAVE juſt received, by an expreſs, a letter which cauſes me much emotion. It is from the Biſhop of Autun; he wiſhes in perſon to give his benediction to the marriage

marriage of Léocadie: this flatters me and does me honour. He will be here on the 12th, the appointed day, at eight o'clock in the morning; the ceremony will take place at noon. But the biſhop adds, that he has ſomething very important to *Léocadie* to communicate to us, that a *public declaration is to be made*, and that he begs me to invite Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval and ſome other perſons. What is the meaning of this? I am afraid of nothing; but I am very much agitated. .... We are ſtill overwhelmed by the ſame melancholy; Léocadie, my dear Léocadie is ſo low-ſpirited as to grieve me to death!.... In four days her fate will be decided, and for ever!... Ah! my dear friend! all that is paſſing in my heart is inexpreſſible!... Albert is gloomy, oppreſſed, and reſtleſs.... Be aſſured of it, he ſtill doubts! O! may he forgive himſelf as I forgive him!

The

The Viſcount de St. Méran arrived yeſterday. He is dejected too, and moſt unaccountably abſent.... Monſieur du Reſnel is thoughtful..... I marry my children; Léocadie is on the point of becoming my daughter-in-law, and I am not the happieſt of mothers!... I have ſtill, and without intermiſſion, a painful palpitation of the heart; the leaſt noiſe that I hear makes me ſtart; I am in expectation of ſome extraordinary event, and I cannot foreſee whether it will be fortunate or unlucky..... I no longer have any faith in this unknown mother; yet it is poſſible that Monſieur and Madame d'Olbreuſe may be the accomplices of ſuch an impoſture; for I know, beyond all doubt, that if this unknown mother does not exiſt, they are concerned in the conſpiracy which deceived us! The atrocious note, addreſſed to Albert, is certainly in the ſame hand-writing as the other letters;

ters; and the motto of the ſeal was: "*To live in order to expiate!*" All this is unheard of, inexplicable.

Religion alone ſupports me; I can be calm only in praying to God. After ſo many trials and troubles, ſo many ſecret and tormenting vexations, I dare flatter myſelf that tranquillity will be reſtored to me!.... And, at other moments, when I conſider the conſternation of all thoſe around me, it ſeems to me that every thing announces ſome frightful cataſtrophe!... I am terrified at the envenomed hatred that has purſued me for theſe ſixteen years!..... but I ſubmit: and if I have not the courage to get the better of fear, I have, at leaſt for a long time, had that of reſigning myſelf to misfortune!

Oh! how much I ſuffer in being deprived of you, and in knowing that you are uneaſy and unhappy!..... I

am

am aſſured that the Baron is not ſo ill. Tiphaine has ſaid that he was not without hope. Monſieur du Reſnel will pay you a viſit to-morrow, and bring me back word how you are. I will myſelf come and paſs a couple of hours with you the day after to-morrow; and be aſſured, my friend, that you will every morning have a meſſenger from Erneville.

LETTER XLIII.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* BARONESS.

Erneville, June 10.

WE have this moment learned that the Duke de Roſmond is dead. We conceal this

this event from Léocadie; her melancholy is already but too profound! This news would certainly augment it ſtill more. At preſent, Madam, there is no doubt that the letter from the Biſhop of Autun relates to the death of the Duke de Roſmond. *This public declaration* will ſurely be the diſcovery of a great myſtery. It appears to me more certain than ever that the Duke is Léocadie's father, and that the biſhop, the friend of all this family, has undertaken to declare this ſecret. The publicity that is wiſhed to be given to this confeſſion cannot but be a beneficent action on the part of a man of his character; his object is certainly to juſtify Pauline in an authentic manner. But who then is the *mother?* From what infernal hand came the note that the Marquis received? The biſhop wiſhes to *give his benediction to the marriage of Léocadie*; this is ſolemnly announcing, beforehand, that he thinks this

this marriage lawful. . . . . In ſhort, in two days we ſhall know all. I reckon the hours and minutes; never did time appear ſo tedious to me! . . . .

Adieu, Madam; in performing your duties with ſo much perfection, huſband your health; the uneaſineſs that it occaſions us adds a cruel torment to the chagrin of being ſeparated from you. I ſhall come to-morrow, and bring you myſelf Pauline's note; may I find the *Baron in a ſituation leſs afflicting!*

LETTER XLIV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Erneville, June 12, ten o'clock in the morning.

I AVAIL myſelf, Madam, of the opportunity of the carrier who brings you the bathing-tub, to write you a line without interfering with the meſſenger that we ſhall diſpatch after the ceremony. The biſhop arrived at eight o'clock; but what has ſurpriſed us is, that he has brought with him the firſt preſident of the parliament of Dijon, Monſieur de ****. The biſhop ſaid that he came only to *give his benediction to the marriage*, that the firſt preſident would deliver up ſome important papers entruſted to his hands; but that, for this purpoſe,

purpoſe, he ſhould wait for the arrival of two perſons who would certainly be at Erneville before noon. You know the cold and grave deportment, and the immoveable face of the firſt preſident; ſo his countenance, as uſual, ſays nothing; but the biſhop appears exceſſively thoughtful and affected. However, he never manifeſted more eſteem and more friendſhip for Pauline; an obſervation which diſpels all inquietude. The biſhop knowing that the Chevalier de Celtas is within nine miles of this place, has entreated the Marquis to ſend him a card of invitation; which is done: another certain proof that the queſtion is to juſtify Pauline. Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval, on a letter which muſt have excited their curioſity, have alſo reſolved to come. They are juſt arrived, almoſt at the ſame time as the Chevalier de Celtas. As for the Marquis, he no longer knows whether he ſtands on his head or his heels; ſcarcely

dares he lift his eyes on Pauline; he ſpeaks to her only in a ſtammering voice. Every thing proves to him, in ſhort, that ſhe is innocent. Léocadie will be his daughter-in-law in the courſe of two hours; his confuſion and his remorſe are inexpreſſible!..... Pauline to-day ſees no one but Léocadie, and thinks only of dreſſing her out..... She got up at five o'clock, and went into Léocadie's apartment, whom ſhe found not only awake, but dreſſed and bathed with tears. "Come," ſaid ſhe to her, "come with me; let us go and look "for courage and confidence." At theſe words ſhe took her under the arm, and led her to the pariſh-church. She made her kneel by her ſide before the ſtone-font where Pauline was baptized, and where Léocadie alſo went through the ſame ceremony. They were alone in the church; and Pauline turning round to Léocadie: "Dear child," ſaid ſhe to her, "it is at "this very place that, in the firſt moments

"of

" of our life, we were purified, and marked " with the ſacred ſeal of religion!..... " From that inſtant we have preſerved " our precious innocence; let us here ab- " jure human weakneſſes, let us thank the " Creator and pray with hope!" On this, Léocadie (from whom I had the account) felt herſelf reanimated; her tears flowed, but without bitterneſs; ſhe remained at prayers with her mother till breakfaſt-time, then they returned to the caſtle; and I was ſo aſtoniſhed at the ſerenity which I remarked on their countenances, that I interrogated Léocadie, who related to me what I have juſt told you.

If I was ſtruck at St. Méran's ſudden arrival, I am ſtill more ſo at the condition he is in to-day. He neither ſees, hears, nor anſwers; he is quite beſide himſelf, and plunged into the moſt profound melancholy; he knows the *ſecret*, I have no doubt: but if, as every thing now proves, this ſecret is to the honour of Pauline,

how

how can he be ſo painfully affected at it? This is incomprehenſible.

I may prolong my narration, for there has not been found a cart ſufficiently large and ſtrong to carry the bathing-tub. I ſhall go and take a turn in the drawing-room before I cloſe this letter.

Half paſt eleven o'clock.

Pauline, more engaging, more lovely than ever, and Léocadie, "*fair as the new-born ſtar that gilds the morn*," have juſt entered the drawing-room. Then the preſident took from his huge coat-pocket a caſket, opened it, lifted up the lid, and diſplayed ſome of the moſt brilliant diamonds imaginable, and advancing towards Léocadie, preſented to her this caſket.... Léocadie became confuſed, and looked at her mother. "From whom," ſays Pauline, "comes this preſent?"—"Madam," replied the preſident gravely, "from a "perſon who has a right to offer it."—

"Well, Sir," rejoined Pauline, "when "we know who that perſon is, Léocadie "ſhall accept it." At theſe words, the preſident placed the caſket on the table. At this moment, my eyes were directed towards St. Méran: he was dreadfully pale!.... In ſhort, Madam, what I cannot deſcribe to you, is the embarraſſment, uneaſineſs, and aſtoniſhment of Monſieur d'Orgeval, his wife, and the Chevalier de Celtas. The latter, in particular, would willingly aſſume a free, eaſy, incredulous, and ſneering air; but he cannot ſucceed in this: beſides, he is at a loſs to whom to ſpeak, having fallen out with Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval; he wiſhed to draw near the biſhop and the worthy rector; but he was received by them with the moſt cold and dry manner. The preſident treated him no better; Madame Regnard changed her place when he advanced towards her, and I forbad Remi and Sauval to anſwer him; ſo that he was reduced

reduced to the converſation of Mademoiſelle du Rocher. I think that he greatly repents the curioſity which brought him hither. Monſieur d'Orgeval ſtands like a ninny, ſometimes on one foot, ſometimes on another; he keeps ſauntering about the drawing-room, and knows not how to kill time. His wife ſneers, yawns, and fans herſelf. The preſident, the biſhop, and the grand vicars keep up a general converſation, which turns only on indifferent ſubjects....

Great news!.... I am informed *that a coach and ſix, with the blinds down*, has juſt arrived in the village, and ſtopped before the houſe of the rector, who, with the firſt preſident, has juſt left the caſtle, in order to go and ſpeak to theſe ſtrangers.

Adieu, Madam; the carrier is at length going to ſet off; I ſhall, however, give him this letter, and, in the courſe of an hour, I will let you know the reſt.

LETTER XLV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

June 12, half paſt three o'clock in the afternoon.

O! eternal juſtice! ..... attend, *perfect female friend*, and proſtrate yourſelf with us to thank the ſovereign arbiter of human deſtinies! .... At the expiration of half an hour, the rector came back quite out of breath and red in the face; we ſurrounded him; we queſtioned him; he anſwered that he had eſtabliſhed the ſtrangers in his houſe, that he had promiſed to ſay nothing more about them, that, beſides, he was ignorant of the ſubject of their voyage; but that the firſt preſident was going to conduct them to Erneville-caſtle

in

in a moment. Léocadie turned pale, Pauline was moved, the Marquis became confuſed and agitated. St. Méran roſe and buried himſelf in the receſs of a window, turning his back on all the company, who were looking at each other, and whiſpering.... At laſt, we heard the noiſe of a carriage; the Marquis wiſhed to meet the ſtrangers; the biſhop ſtopped him, ſaying, with a tone of authority: "No, "Sir, ſtay here, I beg of you." The Marquis, thunderſtruck, remained..... The door of the drawing-room opened. The firſt preſident appeared alone, advanced two or three ſteps, and addreſſing the Marchioneſs with a ſolemn air: "Madam," ſaid he to her, "the Counteſs "de Roſmond, who wiſhes to reveal to "you an important ſecret, requeſts your "permiſſion to come in."..... At the name of *Roſmond*, there was a general movement in the room.... every one

got up; Pauline, confuſed, anſwered only by an inclination of the head.

The preſident went out, and, almoſt at the ſame inſtant, the two folding-doors flew open, when the lovely Counteſs de Roſmond made her appearance, in deep mourning, leaning on the preſident; ſhe advanced ſlowly, with down-caſt eyes. ..... Her perfect and ſtriking beauty, the dazzling ſplendour and majeſty of which were ſet off by her black dreſs, cauſed us no leſs aſtoniſhment than her reſemblance to Léocadie! Scarcely had ſhe appeared before we heard two ſcreams, which ſeemed to come from the bottom of the heart! Léocadie in amaze, ſprang towards her, and fell ſenſeleſs at her feet! .... The Marquis turned pale, trembled, and ſtaggered..... I was beſide him. He ſeized my hand, and, ſqueezing it ſtrongly: "Juſt heaven!" exclaimed he, with a wild air, "Camille!.... it is "Camille!"

« Camille !" .... he remained motionleſs, with his mouth partly open, his hair ſtanding on end, and his eyes fixed on the Counteſs ! .... Pauline, in the midſt of this confuſion, ſaw nothing but Léocadie who had fainted ; ſhe flew to her, and, with aſſiſtance, placed her on a ſopha ; when Léocadie, bathed with the tears of the Counteſs and of Pauline, and in the arms of both, reopened her eyes, ſaying : « O ! « my mother !"—« Is it I ?" exclaimed at once Pauline and the Counteſs. « Ah ! « both !" anſwered Léocadie..... Judge of our ſurpriſe ! .... but how much it was to be increaſed .... The Counteſs ſuddenly roſe up ; ſhe advanced into the middle of us, leant one hand on the table, and, addreſſing the Marquis : « It is time," ſaid ſhe, « to juſtify innocence. I cannot « do it without diſcloſing our miſconduct ! « I ſhall find means to expiate mine ; and « the happineſs of your virtuous wife will « repair yours !" .... On this, turning

round to the company: "I am," continued ſhe, "the mother of Léocadie..... and "her father is Monſieur d'Erneville!"... After having pronounced theſe words, ſhe let down a black veil, entirely covered her face, and left the drawing-room. Léocadie flew after her and diſappeared..... while the Marquis fell at the feet of Pauline. .... "O! incomparable woman!" cried he, embracing her knees and ſhedding a flood of tears; "I ought to paſs my life "at your feet, and I am not even worthy "of being ſuffered there; you ought to "puſh me far away from you; for me, "there is no other expiation than your "hatred, deſpair, and death!"..... Pauline's only anſwer was to throw herſelf into his arms, and to preſs him with tranſport to her boſom!.... We all wept .... Envy even, extinguiſhed, or at leaſt ſuſpended, ſuffered the tears of feeling and admiration to flow; we ſurrounded Pauline; every one wiſhed to embrace her, or touch

touch and kiſs her garment; the enthuſiaſm was univerſal; it ſeized on every heart, and the tears ſhed by the Chevalier de Celtas and Madame d'Orgeval were as ſincere as mine! .... Pauline, that divine being, Pauline..... oh! what pure and heavenly joy beamed on her face!..... She has done much more than confound her enemies, ſhe has conquered them, ſhe has even ſubdued them. As light diſſipates darkneſs, as truth annihilates error, I believe that virtue, which ſhews itſelf with a ſplendour ſo mild and ſuch a ſublimity, has the happy privilege of purifying all who contemplate it.... Who can remain wicked on knowing Pauline, on ſeeing her ſuch as ſhe is?.... In the mean time the Counteſs, who had retired into an adjoining room, ſent back Léocadie, conducted by the preſident. Pauline herſelf placed Léocadie in the arms of her father, who received her with tranſport, contemplated her with rapture, and

thought he beheld her for the firſt time! Maurice ran, weeping, to embrace his ſiſter; and the happy Pauline, in the midſt of this intereſting group, enjoyed a felicity which fully indemnified her for ſixteen years of ſuffering and mortification. The biſhop, approaching Pauline, whiſpered to her, and took her with the Marquis and Léocadie into the little green drawing-room. There, he aſked Léocadie's hand for his pupil, for the beloved nephew of the Counteſs de Roſmond, in ſhort, for Count Jules, that charming young man whoſe graces and conduct we have ſo much admired; the biſhop ſaid that the Duke de Roſmond, a few days before his death, being informed of every thing by his ſiſter, conſented, as well as his wife, to this marriage, in favour of which the Counteſs has made to her nephew a donation of all her property. Accordingly the biſhop produced the conſent in writing of the Duke and Dutcheſs; the biſhop adds that

Count

Count Jules attaches to this union all the happineſs of his life, and that a powerful reaſon makes the Counteſs de Roſmond wiſh that it may not be deferred. Léocadie, already apprized of the circumſtance by her mother, ingenuouſly declared that ſhe had for the Count the moſt perfect eſteem and the moſt tender ſentiments; and it was immediately decided that Léocadie ſhould marry Count Jules next Thurſday. They ſent for the Count, who having arrived with his aunt, had remained at the rector's. He was preſented to the Marquis and to Pauline; his love and the frenzy of his joy completed the embelliſhment of the enchanting pictures by which we were ſurrounded!..... Pauline, now ſupremely happy, re-entered the drawing-room, communicated to us this laſt news, and invited all the company to remain at the caſtle till Saturday; then taking Léocadie and Count Jules by the hand, ſhe led them into the arms of the Counteſs,

who was ſtill in the cabinet. Theſe two RIVAL MOTHERS, ſo worthy of being the friends of each other, paſſed near an hour together with the young lovers. I very much envied the biſhop and St. Méran, who, alone admitted to this converſation, enjoyed the happineſs of admiring at once the perfection of virtue, the heroiſm of repentance, and the delightful picture offered by innocence, nature, gratitude, and love.

At half paſt one o'clock, the Counteſs, taking Léocadie with her, returned to the rector's, where her friend Agnès was waiting for her. Léocadie will remain at the parſonage-houſe, with her mother, till the day fixed on for the marriage. The Count reſides at the caſtle.

The Counteſs, who knows my attachment to Léocadie, has written me a very affecting note, in which, while ſhe refuſes what I wiſhed to do for her daughter, ſhe ſays every thing to me that can conſole friendſhip

friendſhip for the misfortune of being uſeleſs, and invites me to come and ſee her this evening.

This day, no doubt, is the happieſt of my life: it juſtifies Providence and all the ſentiments of my heart! Yet one thing poiſons my joy; St. Méran ſuffers, St. Méran is unhappy!.... He adores the Counteſs, and he is perſuaded that ſhe is meditating a cruel ſacrifice; this is the only ſecret with which ſhe has not entruſted him. Indeed, it appears to me but too probable that St. Méran's conjecture is well founded. .... He related to me that, being in the cabinet with the Counteſs and Léocadie, the latter begging her mother to liſt up her veil, the Counteſs anſwered: "No, "my daughter, after the confeſſion which "I have juſt publicly made, *an eternal veil* "*ought to conceal me for ever from the* "*eyes of all men!*" St. Méran interprets this phraſe in a manner which drives him

to deſpair; and I believe that he gueſſes right.

You will certainly have no ſmall curioſity to know who this young Stephen is, that we have ſo long conſidered as Albert's ſon. You will be much ſurprized to learn that the Marquis himſelf (from what he told me) believed he was the father of this child; but that Stephen, however, is not related to him. The Counteſs ſent word to the Marquis by St. Méran, that Stephen is only a poor orphan taken from the cradle at the foundling-hoſpital. The Counteſs has promiſed to give Pauline and Léocadie a manuſcript containing the particulars of all her own hiſtory, and in which will be found the explanation of this ſtrange and myſterious affair.

In ſhort, Madam, we are going to ſee two weddings. Monſieur d'Orgeval, in his firſt moments of effuſion and ſympathy, prevailed on his brother and Pauline to ſecure

ſecure alſo the happineſs of Zéphyrine by uniting her to Maurice, who, after his marriage, will travel for two years. They ſent for Zéphyrine, who, as you may well ſuppoſe, takes a double intereſt in the happineſs of her young female friend.

Oh! how much have you been wiſhed for at Erneville, within theſe laſt four hours! how many times has Pauline repeated to me: "*Ah! if ſhe were here!*" She will ſteal away to-morrow, in order to come and embrace you. It is half paſt five o'clock; we are at laſt going to ſit down to dinner; I am called. Adieu, Madam, I will no longer delay a meſſenger who will make you ſo happy.

LETTER XLVI.

From the MARQUIS *to the* COUNTESS *his Mother.*

Erneville, June 16.

AT length, Pauline, Léocadie, Maurice, all thoſe I love are happy on this ſolemn day!.... We are juſt come from church. Léocadie is irrevocably engaged, the merit and the virtues of the Count Jules anſwer to me for her happineſs. My ſon has received the hand of Zéphyrine, and, in a fortnight, will ſet out for Italy. I ſhall not follow him thither. Pauline wiſhes me to remain here; what intereſt more powerful for me in future than the hope of regaining her affection! What duty more ſacred than that of obeying her and devoting

devoting to her the remainder of my life. .... On opening my eyes, on again finding Pauline, I was, from the very firſt moment, ſure of obtaining a generous pardon; but I did not yet know the ſupreme power of this conſoling angel. I did not believe, as I wrote you word in my firſt letter, that it was poſſible to reconcile me to myſelf, to make me bear the frightful weight of ſo much remorſe! .... Ah! I could fear Pauline only on retracing to myſelf my crimes; in her preſence, I can only adore her. How could I dread that ſweet look where indulgence is never painted but with the expreſſion of ſenſibility? How could I be overwhelmed by a generoſity which reſembles nothing but affection? How, in ſhort ſhould I be embarraſſed in a *tête-à-tête*, ſo formidable to the culprit, when I find in her all the effuſions of confidence, and of the moſt intimate friendſhip? ... I am ſtill loved by Pauline: my exiſtence

cannot

cannot be debaſed, neither can it be burdenſome to me!.... And what ſentiment beſides attaches me to life? That maſterpiece of nature and of education, that innocent object who occaſioned all my injuſtice, whom I admired only with agitation and jealouſy, whom miſtruſt prohibited me from loving, whoſe *likeneſs*, eſpecially within theſe two years, ſtruck me without affording me any information, and aſtoniſhed me without moving my compaſſion, that dear Léocadie is my daughter!... I love her with fondneſs! Oh! what a charm I find in this natural affection! This is the only homage that I am allowed to pay to her unfortunate mother; and it is identifying myſelf with Pauline of whom ſhe is the idol!.... Ah! my mother, how ſhall I explain to you all that paſſes in my heart! You know ſo well all my errors, all my wanderings; you alone can read in it, and conceive an idea of my confuſion, my agitation, my joy, and my

my repentance !.... I cannot ſay that I am perfectly happy! Alas! I am too culpable for the enjoyment of happineſs; but I have reſumed all the powerful ties that make us fond of life! and Pauline's reputation, yes, that reputation ſo bright and pure, although it aggravates my faults, ſeems to me to efface the ſhame of them.

That cave, in which a ſtrange and melancholy error had made me paſs ſo many painful nights, that cave, where my diſordered imagination has ſo frequently been bewildered.... I conſecrate it to Léocadie! .... Her mother appeared there, I know not by what means!.... But, no doubt, it was maternal affection which drew her thither, and made her wander into the caſtle!.... I will erect a pillar on the rock; I will engrave on it theſe words: "*Prodigy of maternal love!*" I will give Léocadie the key of this cave, and I will return to it no more! that would be to profane it!.... No; my mother, I do

not

not know why ſhe took the name of *Camille Dercy* .... ſhe is to give to Pauline the hiſtory of her life; we ſhall then know every thing.

Ah! do not doubt it, Stephen will always be dear to me; he was delivered to me by *her*; for ſixteen years, I thought that he was my ſon; you have laviſhed on him the moſt tender care, he is amiable and well-bred. My heart adopts him, he is for ever ranked among my children!

Adieu, happieſt of mothers (alas! only through Pauline!) Ah! how pleaſing will it be to me to introduce to your arms that daughter ſo worthy of you, and to preſs at once to my boſom the two objects of an affection ſo warm, and of a gratitude ſo profound!

LETTER XLVII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Erneville, June 18.

WILL you believe, my dear mother, that, ſince my laſt letters, Pauline has acquired new rights over my heart! rights more powerful than all thoſe which ſhe had already?... Will you believe that what I have juſt diſcovered is ſtill above all that we know, and that, in ſhort, the ſublimity of ſentiment ſurpaſſes in her, if poſſible, the heroiſm of virtue?..... This angelic creature has known, from their origin, all my culpable ſecrets, without ever indulging herſelf in a reproach, a complaint, or even a confidence depoſited in the boſom

of

of friendſhip, without ever ſaying a ſingle word of them either to the beſt of mothers, or to the moſt perfect of friends. Madame de Vordac was, in this reſpect, in the ſame ignorance as ourſelves!.... Pauline, informed by anonymous letters, knew all!..... She diſcovered, at the time, all the artifice of the journey to Vichi, the only thing that ſhe entruſted to Madame de Vordac, becauſe at firſt ſhe knew not the motive of it, and ſuſpected nothing criminal in it. But, afterwards, being acquainted with the whole intrigue, ſhe impoſed on herſelf an eternal ſilence. La France, whom ſhe diſpatched to Vichi, was ſecretly penſioned by her from that period, in order that he might not reveal a myſtery which I wiſhed to conceal. I had diſcovered that ſhe paid this penſion; I never mentioned it to you, becauſe it was, in *my* mind, a very convincing proof againſt her; I could not diſemble to you my miſtruſt; but it would have been

been frightful to me to diſhonour her in your eyes; too weak not to love to complain, I had, however, too much feeling for it to be poſſible for me to reveal what condemned her; although your incredulity frequently tired out my patience, I found in it a ſort of conſolation, it was pleaſing to me to ſee Pauline ſtill eſteemed by a ſoul like yours. In ſhort, your conviction, which made no impreſſion on my mind, produced an irreſiſtible one on my heart; it ſtaggered my certainty, and to me balanced the evidence. But while, deceived by falſe appearances, I was condemning, I was injuring Pauline; ſhe, knowing with certainty all my real faults, was occupied only with the care of concealing my wanderings, and of ſparing me the embarraſſment and confuſion of bluſhing at them in her eyes!

What language, what encomiums could expreſs the admiration which ſuch conduct deſerves! A mother's heart and mine may

may poſſibly appreciate it; but one can praiſe Pauline worthily only by the recital of her actions. The ball that we were to give yeſterday, did not take place, becauſe we learnt, at noon, the death of poor Baron de Vordac. He was eighty years of age, and never made his wife happy; ſo this event could not afflict us, the more eſpecially as Pauline is perſuaded that Monſieur du Reſnel will marry the Baroneſs; but Pauline, out of reſpect for the mourning of her friend, immediately countermanded the whole entertainment. Pauline, du Reſnel, and I, went and paſſed the day with the widow. The Baroneſs, notwithſtanding our entreaties, will not come to Erneville for theſe ſix weeks. We did not return to the caſtle till midnight; our young married folks, according to our orders, had not ſat up for us, every one was gone to bed; du Reſnel retired to his apartment; it was the fineſt weather imaginable; Pauline propoſed to me to take a walk

by

by moon-light. And ſhe took me into her private garden, where, three years ago, ſhe had cauſed a *monument* to be erected! .... The hour and the moon-light recalled to my mind my melancholy nocturnal perambulations to the cave. I ſighed: I felt a painful emotion! .... Suffering myſelf to be guided by Pauline, and moving forward, I ſaw that ſhe was conducting me towards the monument, and I remarked, with ſurprize, that it was ſplendidly illuminated by ſmall glaſs lamps concealed behind the foliage, and by two large alabaſter vaſes containing wax-candles and placed in the front of the tomb. This illumination produced a charming effect; but I was aſtoniſhed on remarking that the monument was partly open, and on diſcovering, through this opening, a ſort of niche made of bricks, one of the ſides of which being thrown down, exhibited a cedar-box. I enquired into this circumſtance; and

Pauline, inſtead of anſwering me, ſqueezed my hand with tender emotion, and made me ſit down beſide her on a turf-ſeat near the monument!.... I looked at her with as much confuſion as aſtoniſhment! Never did I ſee her lovely countenance ſo affecting!.... She joined her hands, and raiſing them towards heaven with a divine expreſſion: "O! Providence!" exclaimed ſhe, "O! thou who guideſt every thing "by admirable and concealed ſprings, "O! Creator of the univerſe, how mad "are we to murmur in the time of affliction, ſince the moſt frightful misfortune "may, through thy goodneſs, be only "the neceſſary preparative to a ſupreme "felicity!... Dear Albert," continued ſhe, "you ſhall know whether Pauline "has ever ceaſed to love you!"... At theſe words, ſhe told me to read the inſcription traced with her hand on the ſtone enclоſed

encloſed in the monument! .... What were my feelings on reading theſe words:

*"To the manes of the unfortunate Camille! .. 17**."*

A flood of tears eſcaped from my eyes; I remained dumb, and motionleſs!.... You know, my dear mother, that, about three years ago, in the year 17**, I loſt a pocket-book containing a paper, intitled:

"Reveries of the Marquis d'Erneville."

This writing expreſſed with clearneſs my *error* and its cauſe. It fell into the hands of ſome enemy, and was ſent to Pauline! And this was the real ſubject of that lively grief which, at the time, I attributed to the falſe report of the death of the Duke de Roſmond!.... While this angel was, in ſecret, lamenting my folly, I was provoked at her deſpair, and I inſulted the tears which I cauſed to be ſhed!.... You think you know all?.... O! my mother, attend to the reſt!.... No; the ſupreme being, the Creator who formed this truly

angelic ſoul, can alone foreſee and divine its ſublime movements! ....

Pauline lifted up the box, opened it, and took out of it two ſmall manuſcripts; one of them was mine, which I loſt, and which was ſent to her; the other, written by herſelf, and of which the following is a faithful copy, is intitled:

"*The Reveries of Pauline.*"

"Yes, death purifies all the affections! "it annihilates culpable projects and "deſires; it ſuffers nothing to ſubſiſt but "intereſting regrets, and grief ever re- "ſpectable and affecting.... Albert, thou "weepeſt! I will weep with thee!.... "In vain, thou flieſt from me, in vain "thou ſhutteſt thy heart againſt me! my "ingenious affection will find means to "re-eſtabliſh and preſerve between us "that ſympathy, the ties of which thou art "breaking!.... This mournful monu- "ment which thou wiſhedſt to conſtruct, "but durſt not, my hands have erected!

"..... I ſhall watch with thee: at the
"hour when thou art groaning in the
"ſilence of the night by the light of the
"moon, Pauline will alſo ſhed the bitter
"tears of the moſt unfortunate ſentiment!
"..... Thou regretteſt a beloved object.
"..... Oh! this frightful regret alſo rends
"my ſoul! ..... our divided hearts have
"ſtill the ſame movements! ..... Ah!
"why cannot I receive into my boſom
"thy ſorrowful complaints, and, with the
"moſt tender compaſſion, ſoften thy miſ-
"fortunes, and calm the terrors of thy
"diſordered imagination? ..... How
"powerful muſt have been the charm that
"led thee aſtray! I know only thy weakneſs;
"but do I want to know its excuſe; am I
"not able to ſuppoſe every thing that can
"juſtify thee? .... Alas! thou thinkeſt
"me guilty! I am innocent; yet my pre-
"tended crime is not, on that account, the
"leſs real in thy eyes; and thou forgiveſt it!
"In thy very injuſtice I find the noble ex-

" ample of a ſublime generoſity! Shall I
" have leſs indulgence for an error, a thou-
" ſand times leſs blameable than that which
" thou attributeſt to me?.... No; no;
" I ſee only thy misfortune and thy grief!
" When thou ſuffereſt, I can but pity thee
" and grieve!.... What! in theſe very
" ſpots that beheld our birth, in theſe
" favourite ſpots, witneſſes of the ſports
" and pleaſures of our infancy, and of the
" happineſs of our early youth, Albert
" avoids Pauline; Albert, wandering, in-
" ſulated, thinks to be able to weep alone,
" and to abandon himſelf alone to the moſt
" profound melancholy!..... Pauline
" exiſts; and Albert waſtes himſelf in re-
" grets over a grave!.... Ah! thou
" diggeſt mine by nouriſhing this gloomy
" ſadneſs!.... Albert! thou no longer
" loveſt any thing but inanimate aſhes;
" thou no longer invokeſt any thing but a
" ſhade; and Pauline, faithful, Pauline
" ever alive to feeling, Pauline groaning

" and

" and diſtracted, calls thee, and holds out
" her arms to thee! .... During theſe
" long nights conſecrated to our melan-
" choly reveries, this garden, theſe bow-
" ers, as in the happy days of my youth,
" reſound only with the name of Albert!
" .... And the echo of the cave repeats
" only the name of *Camille!* .... Thou
" ſeeſt her ſtill! thy imagination repro-
" duces what no longer exiſts! .... and,
" for thee, Pauline is annihilated; thou
" miſtakeſt her; thou forgetteſt her? ...
" Ah! it is Camille who ſtill lives!
" Camille is ſtill in thy heart! ... Pauline
" has diſappeared! Pauline is baniſhed
" from thy remembrance! .... My huſ-
" band, my brother, my friend, I have
" loſt all! .... and thou has loſt only a
" miſtreſs! Had death even not ſnatched
" her away from thee, a few years more
" would have broken thoſe frail ties! ....
" but time can only draw cloſer and
" ſtrengthen the indiſſoluble knot of ſacred

" friendſhip! .... I will here depoſit this " writing, this monument of my grief and " of my affection. When I ſhall be no " no more, this tomb will be open to " Albert, and at leaſt he will then know " that Pauline knew how to love!"

Can you conceive, my dear mother, what I muſt have experienced on reading this manuſcript? Can your heart, tender as it is, repreſent to itſelf all the tranſports of mine?.... I did not even attempt to expreſs to Pauline what I felt. What language could have given an idea of a remorſe ſo urgent, ſo tormenting, of a gratitude and admiration ſo impaſſioned! .... I fell at her feet, I bathed them with tears; I preſſed her hands in mine, I ſurveyed, I contemplated with ecſtaſy that ſweet, that lovely face where nature has ſtamped the noble and affecting impreſſion of all the virtues that are in her ſoul! That angelic face, whoſe pure and bewitching expreſſion never painted the delirium of

of love, will always preſerve its raviſhing charm! It is the immortal attraction of ſenſibility blended with celeſtial innocence.

Here then is the incomparable being that I have miſtaken for ſixteen years! and whom I was ſtill inſulting with ſo much paſſion and indignity three weeks ago! .... When I think of my wanderings, of my crimes, I cannot conceive my happineſs; if culpable, how can one be happy? What do I ſay? Ah! how not be ſo, when one is beloved by Pauline!

It has been out of my power to-day to talk to you of any thing but Pauline and of my felicity; to-morrow I ſhall anſwer all your queſtions..... Ah! mother! my happineſs is your work! how impatient I am to be once more at your feet, that I may thank you for it again and again!

LETTER XLVIII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* COUNTESS.

June.

CAN you doubt it, my dear mother? Yes; your Pauline is *perfectly happy*, happier than ſhe has ever been. Ah! mother, far from regretting that brilliant time of youth, I think with pleaſure that theſe ſtormy days are paſſed!.... Henceforth, ſecure both from ſeductions and calumny, I have now only to run a career exempt from dangers; I now ſee before me only a road ſtrewed with immortal flowers, which cannot fade, and are without thorns! Thus repoſing myſelf delightfully in the arms of friendſhip, rendered inviolable by ſo many trials, I ſhall advance towards my

my laſt end with confidence and ſerenity!

How tender is Albert! how amiable he is to me!.... He has revealed every thing to me: what a ſtrange hiſtory! how excuſable is this error! Albert has communicated to me an infinite number of circumſtances which relate to me, but of which I was ignorant, and which were likely to ſtrengthen all his ſuſpicions. He too received anonymous letters.... I will not endeavour to find out whence proceeded theſe atrocities: I ought to think only of thanking heaven that has made all theſe acts of malice contribute to my happineſs! The wicked man is no more than the blind inſtrument of eternal juſtice, whoſe rage God makes uſe of to accompliſh his equitable decrees of vengeance or love, to terrify vice or honour virtue.

If ſome enemy had not ſent me *the reveries of the cave*, that writing which plunged me into ſuch cruel deſpair, Albert would

not have received from me the moſt endearing proof of affection that I could ever have given him; and, near that tomb where, for three years, I have ſhed ſo many bitter tears, I ſhould not, the day before yeſterday, have paſſed the ſweeteſt, the happieſt moments of my life!.... O! what happineſs can be compared to mine! the recollection of my misfortunes ſtill enhances its value!.... Albert has reſtored to me all his affection, all his confidence; our cruel variances have produced between us only the effect of a long abſence; after a lapſe of ſixteen years, we find each other again, and with tranſport. What things we have to ſay to each other!.... what a delightful intereſt animates our converſations!.... And Léocadie is beloved by Albert!.... And Léocadie's fate is fixed in the moſt happy, and moſt brilliant manner! She loves her huſband as I love Albert, and is adored by him.... Great God! how ungrateful ſhould I be

towards

towards Providence, if I did not think that a ſingle day of ſuch felicity ought to efface every trace of reſentment and grief. And indeed I am ſincerely reconciled to the Chevalier de Celtas and my ſiſter-in-law. Happineſs ought to make us forget every thing that can ſour our temper.

Our excellent female friend is at laſt free; I have had, on this ſubject, a long converſation with Monſieur du Reſnel; I have communicated to him the only wiſh that there remains for me to form; he appeared ſurprized; he was moved; and, on being preſſed to anſwer, he told me that if he was accepted, he would joyfully unite himſelf *to the faithful female friend of Pauline*. Thus, this project, ſo dear to my heart, will be realized. How pleaſing will it be to me to ſee at laſt this truly unexceptionable woman as happy as ſhe deſerves to be; for Monſieur du Reſnel is the man, of all others, whom ſhe eſteems

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the moſt, and whom, in the bottom of her heart, ſhe loves the beſt.

I go conſtantly every evening to the parſonage-houſe to ſpend an hour with the Counteſs de Roſmond, who does not ſtir out, although ſhe may, without running the riſk of meeting Albert, who, on his part, does not go out of the gardens of the caſtle. Ah! mother, how intereſting is this beautiful and lovely woman! what graces, what wit, what ſenſibility, what accompliſhments!..... and what a mother ſhe is! how ſhe loves Léocadie!.... what courage ſhe has!.... At three and thirty, with that ſplendid beauty, that brilliant name, that great fortune, to make a public confeſſion which for ever ſeparates her from the court and from ſociety! to ſtrip herſelf of every thing for her daughter, to condemn herſelf to an eternal ſolitude! What ſacrifices at her age and in her ſituation!.... She has made to Count Jules

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an entire donation of her eſtates and of all her property; ſhe has merely reſerved a ſum, in ready money, of ſixty thouſand livres, which, ſhe ſays, is ſufficient for her. Count Jules and Léocadie will, as a preſent enjoyment, accept but the fourth part of this immenſe gift; I ſee that ſhe is firmly reſolved to give the whole, and that even ſhe will not conſent to fix her abode in the manſion of La M**, as her daughter hopes. She is a woman of very great character, and whoſe romantic imagination is exceſſively exalted. I believe that ſhe will even prefer extremities to common and moderate reſolutions. Notwithſtanding *the double rivality* which has cauſed me ſo many painful emotions, I ſincerely admire this extraordinary woman, who has repaired the weakneſs of a moment by ſo much greatneſs of ſoul, ſo many virtues, and ſo many generous ſacrifices. I look at her, I ſurvey her, and I liſten to her with a curioſity mixed with emotion and a tender

tender intereſt. Nevertheleſs, I own to you that I am by no means at my eaſe in her company; ſhe has a ſort of humility that embarraſſes me, becauſe it proceeds ſolely from the recollection of her fault and her ſituation, and not from her diſpoſition, which is naturally proud and imperious. Beſides, Léocadie pays her much more attention than ſhe does me. She thinks, with reaſon, that ſhe owes this ſort of preference to a mother who ſacrifices every thing to her, and who has diſhonoured herſelf in order to acknowledge her and juſtify her benefactreſs. Léocadie wiſhes, as far as lies in her power, to raiſe her fallen mother by every mark of the moſt profound reſpect, and by an affection that amounts even to adoration. She is conſtantly at her feet; and, thinks of no one but her! this ſtrange ſight, ſo new to me, cannot be agreeable to me. .... Léocadie (I cannot doubt it) loves me as tenderly as it is poſſible to love; but

but the ſentiment which ſhe feels for her mother is of a warmer caſt; at this, I am neither ſurprized nor jealous, yet I always ſuffer a little when I find myſelf as a third perſon between them.

No, my mother, in two days I ſhall ſee Count and Counteſs Jules de Roſmond ſet out for Paris, without experiencing any great chagrin. Léocadie is happy: what do I require more? However, muſt I own to you all my weakneſſes? You know that I have never, for a moment, wiſhed to quit the country, even ſince my miſfortunes; but frivolous vanity, which I never felt for myſelf, I am not exempt from for this too much beloved child! I take a pleaſure in thinking that ſhe will appear with luſtre at court and in the great world: I ſhall hear of the approbation that ſhe meets with, and I have no fear in regard to her morals; ſhe loves her huſband; ſhe will be guided by a virtuons mother-in-law; ſhe has too much underſtanding,

ſenſibility,

ſenſibility, religion, and elevation of ſoul, not always to deſpiſe every thing that can reſemble coquetry; in ſhort, ſhe will regularly paſs more than half the year at country-ſeats remote from Paris: I am therefore eaſy as to her principles and her reputation; and I uninterruptedly enjoy the happineſs of repreſenting her to myſelf univerſally admired on a brilliant theatre. Alas! it would be more reaſonable, I know, to wiſh for her a ſituation leſs ſplendid! and indeed I intend to make here only the confeſſion of a weakneſs.

I cannot expreſs to you how well I am ſatisfied with Count Jules: it is impoſſible to be more witty and agreeable, and better informed at his age, or to have more elevated ſentiments. Beſides, his gratitude and extreme attachment to his aunt, would be ſufficient to afford the beſt opinion of his diſpoſition and his heart. He has promiſed me to bring his wife every year into Burgundy, and I am ſure that La M **, notwith-

notwithſtanding the beauty of the ingenious *allegorical* garden, will never make Léocadie forget Erneville. They will ſet out the day after to-morrow with the Counteſs, whom they will leave at Dijon, where ſome buſineſs, ſhe ſays, compels her to ſtop.

Count Jules has not ſeen his mother ſince his father's death (he received from her a poſitive injunction not to return to Paris). Now he can no longer defer his departure.

The Counteſs de Roſmond told me in a whiſper this evening, that ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak to me in private to-morrow morning. I am abſolutely ignorant of what ſhe wiſhes to ſay to me; but this *tête-à-tête* embarraſſes me beforehand.

Adieu, dear mother; my Albert will have ſettled all his affairs in a fortnight, and then he will bring you your happy Pauline. Oh! with what joy will your juſtified child ſee you again, with what delight will ſhe receive your affectionate embraces.

LETTER XLIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

June 20.

How deeply am I affected, my dear mother, at the converſation that I have had this morning with the Counteſs de Roſmond! Ah! what a refined ſoul is hers! what greatneſs, what delicacy!.... Unfortunate woman! How I pity, admire, and love her!..... Yes; ſhe has juſt attached me to her for life!....

I went to her this morning at ſeven o'clock; as ſoon as I entered, Agnès, her friend, got up, went out of the room and left us alone. I remarked that the Counteſs was extremely affected; I was concerned

at

at her ſituation; and emotion deprived me of every ſort of embarraſſment. I took her hand, which I preſſed in mine; ſhe looked at me; and, no doubt, the expreſſion of my face painted all that I felt. .... She threw both her arms round my neck, and while ſhe embraced me, melted into tears; more moved than ſurpriſed at this action, my tears immediately flowed, and I preſſed her ſtrongly to my boſom. "Ah! Madam," cried ſhe, "is it for "you to pity me!" .... And her ſobs increaſed. I was penetrated to the very bottom of my heart..... Her beautiful face ſeems particularly formed to expreſs all the energy, pathos, and ſublimity of grief; it is, above all, in weeping that ſhe is lovely, and reſembles Léocadie..... What would I not have done to conſole her! .... O! how I loved her at that moment! .... At laſt ſhe dried up her tears, and, ſtill holding my hand in hers:

"Before

"Before I leave you," ſaid ſhe to me, "I muſt expreſs to you my regret and "my repentance, and communicate to you "my projects! .... I may, in the eyes "of the world, expiate my weakneſs; but "how make amends for the frightful "troubles which I have occaſioned you! "I have juſtified you, it is true; yet a "dreadful remorſe ſtills preys on me; in "reſtoring to you reputation, have I re-"ſtored to you the happineſs of which I "had robbed you? Have you recovered "it?"—At theſe words, I embraced her again with the moſt ſincere affection; and I anſwered her with all the particularity and confidence that might diſpel her affecting inquietude. As I ſpoke, I ſaw on her face the impreſſion of grief weakened and effaced; there no longer remained on it any but that of the moſt profound ſenſibility; her tears ſtill flowed; but gently and without bitterneſs! .... "Thank heaven," ſaid ſhe to me, "you

"have

"have juſt reſtored and ſecured to me "quiet and peace of mind!.... Now I "have only to confide to you one more "ſecret which I ſhall not declare to my "daughter and my nephew till ſome "months hence..... You know," continued ſhe, "that I am to remain at Di-"jon; but you know not that it is for "life!.... I ſhall ſhut myſelf up in the "convent of the Urſulines, and the day "after to-morrow, I take the veil of a "nun!".....

Judge, my dear mother, of my ſurpriſe and of my extreme emotion. I wiſhed to endeavour to combat ſo cruel a reſolution; but the Counteſs anſwered me with ſo much firmneſs, that I immediately loſt all hope of making her change her intention.... What a ſacrifice, great God! ſo beautiful, ſo young ſtill! what a long expiation for the error of a moment!

She aſſured me that I ſhould approve of it when I had read her hiſtory. She gave

gave me this intereſting manuſcript, copied by Agnès, the original of which, written in her own hand, ſhe has kept, and ſhe will ſend it this autumn to Léocadie. The Counteſs might chooſe a convent in the environs of La M**, at Dieppe, St. Valeri, or Rouen; but ſhe preferred Dijon ſolely on my account, in order that Léocadie might have an additional intereſt to attract her into Burgundy, and that ſhe might not be able to viſit her mother without coming near me! I endeavoured at leaſt to determine her to fix herſelf in your convent; but a reaſon of delicacy and decorum prevents her.

Albert goes too frequently to this monaſtery; and, although you are lodged in the exterior apartments, and no nun can meet or perceive the perſons that come to you, the Counteſs thinks that it was her duty to chooſe a different convent from that in which Albert ſpends his time when he is at Dijon..... She will therefore be

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at the convent of the Urſulines; its rules are very mild; the nuns there devote themſelves to the education of young girls; the talents and information of Madame de Roſmond will alſo be uſeful in this cloiſter. She will there play on the organ; her affecting voice will no longer ſing any thing but the praiſes of the Lord; ſhe will no longer paint any pictures but on religious ſubjects; all her talents, as well as her perſon, will be conſecrated to virtue. Every other uſe would profane them, no doubt; to ſanctify is to ennoble them. Her charms alone will be ſacrificed; theſe, an eternal veil will conceal; but, in a few years more, they muſt fade. Like a brilliant ſtar ſhe has ſhewn herſelf only to ſhine; and ſhe will be eclipſed, all at once, without having appeared to be obſcured!

A very affecting circumſtance is that Agnès, her friend, who, not to quit her, refuſed the greateſt eſtabliſhment, is de-

termined alſo to ſhare her fate, and turns nun at the ſame time with her! ....

On my return to the caſtle, I ſhut myſelf up in order to read the valuable manuſcript which ſhe gave me. Oh! what an impreſſion has the peruſal of it made on me! .... Oh! how much did ſhe deſerve to be loved! I ought to be leſs jealous of the paſſion which ſhe inſpired than of the ſentiments that ſhe diſplays! .... However, Albert ſhall ſee this manuſcript; I will conceal nothing from him .... he will there find his excuſe; who could reſiſt the charm of being adored by ſuch a woman? I conceive your curioſity; and I ſend you, my dear mother, this ſingular and affecting hiſtory. Keep it; when we come to Dijon, you will read it over again, *tête-à tete*, with Albert.

What tears this great ſacrifice will make Léocadie ſhed! I am afflicted, beforehand, at her grief.

Adieu

Adieu, my dear mother; the perusal of this history leaves me as much melancholy as tender sympathy and admiration; what an impression will it then make on Albert and Léocadie!

HISTORY

OF

THE COUNTESS DE ROSMOND;

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

(*Sent by the Marchioneſs d'Erneville to the Counteſs her Mother.*)

THE beſt preceptors can give only accompliſhments and erudition to thoſe who, through their ſmall ſhare of ſenſibility and the levity of their character, are formed to remain for ever in the numerous claſs of perſons of moderate capacity. The moſt perfect education cannot give any of the eminent qualities of the ſoul, ſuch as elevation, energy, perſeverance, and feeling; it really enriches none but thoſe who

are

are born rich; because, not being able to create virtues, it can, nevertheless, strengthen them by principles, direct them by knowledge, and exalt them by culture. It can also correct failings, and, above all, preserve from those great faults which are, in general, only the inevitable consequences of ignorance.

We can adorn, enlarge, and increase the understanding; but the soul is not to be improved: and if, from our early youth, we have, at different periods, shewn a soul more or less great and feeling, it is not that it has changed; it is only that, at these different times, we have followed or neglected, or even been ignorant of, the principles which ought to serve as a foundation for our whole conduct. Profound sensibility may make us commit a crime, as it may prompt us to an heroic action. The greatest qualities of the soul may, when ill directed, lead us to the most de-

plorable exceſſes *. Thus, then, a good education is infinitely leſs uſeful, leſs neceſſary to perſons of a common ſtamp, than to thoſe who have received from Nature a ſuperior ſoul, and, conſequently, great energy and extreme ſenſibility. All men certainly ſtand in need of principles; but indolent and cold beings may be deficient in them with leaſt inconvenience. Beſides, if weak people imbibe them with facility, they loſe them in the ſame manner. We muſt have energy in order to follow them up; people of a great character always preſerve them; in ſhort, it is

* This doctrine is thus conciſely exemplified by one of our beſt poets:

"Reaſon the bias turns to good from ill,
"And *Nero* reigns a *Titus*, if he will.
"The fiery ſoul abhorr'd in Catiline,
"In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine:
"The ſame ambition can deſtroy or ſave,
"And makes a *patriot* as it makes a *knave*."

Tranſlator.

the

the moſt active and moſt impetuous courſer that we muſt break in, and in whoſe mouth we muſt put a curb *.

No doubt, with a refined ſoul, notwithſtanding the want of education, we finiſh by correcting, by purifying and enlightening ourſelves; but we acquire knowledge and wiſdom only by the ſad experience of our faults; and we poſſeſs virtue only after having loſt innocence. Ah! what heart born for it, can, on becoming attached to it again, be conſoled for having forgotten or miſtaken it! ... were it, alas! but for a moment!

I had the misfortune to loſe my parents, before I was well out of my cradle. I was entruſted to the care of the Dowager Dutcheſs de Roſmond, my grandmother.

* Unqueſtionably, among youth, every day affords inſtances like that mentioned by the ancient Greek philoſopher, who, ſpeaking of two of his pupils, ſaid, that "*the one wanted a ſpur, and the other a bridle.*"

Tranſlator.

Born in our ſouthern provinces, ſhe was determined to end her days in a country, the air and mild climate of which agreed with her health. Her great age no longer permitting her to go to court, and into company, ſhe fixed her abode on one of her eſtates in Languedoc, not many miles from Toulouſe. Here it was that I paſſed my infancy.

The Dutcheſs gave me for governeſs a young woman, who was an excellent muſician, played very well on ſeveral inſtruments, and drew in a pretty ſtyle; but who in other reſpects, had no ſort of education, and whoſe mind was extremely contracted. She read nothing but novels; and, from the age of eight or nine years, I partook of this taſte: thus this dangerous kind of reading became my favourite occupation. The Dutcheſs had that ſort of agreeable and frivolous turn of mind which never comes to maturity: incapable of reflecting and of loving paſſionately, never having

having experienced any great misfortunes, ſhe conſidered life as no more than a long party of pleaſure, in which it was neceſſary to think only of amuſing ourſelves or at leaſt of diverting our attention. At the age of ſeventy-two, her ſole occupation was pleaſure and entertainments; ſhe thus advanced gaily towards her grave; not that ſhe had the courage to contemplate it without terror; but, on the contrary, becauſe ſhe ſhut her eyes that ſhe might not ſee it; and inceſſantly directed her ideas to other ſubjects, in order that ſhe might never think of it: ſuch is the pretended firmneſs of the Epicureans; it conſiſts only in forgetfulneſs, indifference, and voluntary blindneſs.

The Dutcheſs had aſſembled, in * * * caſtle, a company of players, muſicians and dancers; we played dramatic pieces, and gave concerts; the care of varying and multiplying pleaſures, was our ſole employment. The Dutcheſs, who, to a

brilliant imagination, joined no ſmall ſhare of taſte, was continually inventing new amuſements; ſhe made me learn to ſhoot with a bow; and I was, betimes, exerciſed in running with a choſen troop of young girls belonging to the village; the Dutcheſs inſtituted prizes, for which we were to contend; and, during the ſummer, which is ſo prolonged under that beautiful ſky, we were made to imitate *the races* of *Tempe*, thoſe *of the games of Flora* performed at night by the light of torches, and the ſports of Diana and her nymphs. My grandmother, thinking that the name of *Roſe*, my chriſtian name, was deficient in nobleneſs and elegance, gave me that of *Uranie*, which appeared to me no more than a very natural idea; for the flatterers who ſurrounded the Dutcheſs had, for a long time paſt, compared me to the Muſes and all the brilliant divinities of fable. In the midſt of this adulation, I preſerved a feeling heart, which ſhielded me from the

the corruption that ſo much flattery might have produced at my age; I diſdained homages ſo profuſely laviſhed; they inſpired me with a dangerous confidence and preſumption; but they never intoxicated me. At length, friendſhip gave me freſh knowledge; ſhe was my firſt preceptreſs, and if ſhe neither had the time nor the poſſibility to eradicate my failings and to form my reaſon, ſhe at leaſt taught me that ſentiment and virtue can alone procure happineſs. We had for a neighbour a young girl named Elbanie: being married at ſixteen, and a mother at ſeventeen, ſhe lived, at a ſmall country-ſeat ſix miles from our manſion, with her mother and her huſband. I was ten years old when I ſaw her for the firſt time; her pretty face intereſted me warmly; ſhe anſwered my careſſes with ſenſibility, and I had no difficulty in prevailing on my grandmother to preſs her to come and ſee us often. Her viſit was ſhort; I hoped to ſee her

again ſoon; but I was deceived in my hopes. We ſent her, in vain, cards of invitation for our plays and entertainments, ſhe always made ſome excuſe; and, at the end of a month, being no longer able to reſiſt my impatience, I obtained leave to go and ſee her. I arrived at a houſe, very ſmall and plain indeed, but uncommonly neat and clean. I went into a cabinet, where I found Elbanie ſitting between her mother and her huſband, and holding on her lap her child whom ſhe ſtill ſuckled. She received me with open arms; I reproached her for not having come to our plays; ſhe anſwered me that our entertainments were charming, but that ſhe found herſelf ſo happy in her own family that ſhe could not find in her heart to tear herſelf from it. "And it is a "great folly," added ſhe, "to quit hap-"pineſs for pleaſure." This expreſſion ſtruck me, and afforded me a ſubject for ſome ſalutary reflections, the firſt of this

ſort

ſort that had hitherto preſented themſelves to my mind. As I was ſuffered to be perfectly my own miſtreſs, I promiſed Elbanie to return as frequently to her houſe as our tumultuous amuſements and our eternal rehearſals of entertainments, ballets, and plays would allow. I became fondly attached to this lovely woman, of whom I ſhall ever preſerve the moſt tender remembrance; for, to her virtuous example and converſation, I owe the very firſt principles and ideas of religion and morality that I ever received. I was entering into my fourteenth year when my grandmother ſuddenly died of an apoplexy. I loved her extremely; and I grieved the more at her death as this event made me quit Languedoc, and ſeparated me for ever from Elbanie. I was transferred to the hands of the Counteſs de * * *, my great aunt, who carried me into Normandy, to her ſeat at La M * *.

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The Counteſs de **** was a rigid devotee; with a little more underſtanding and knowledge, ſhe would have been an unexceptionable woman. A very virtuous life, and a moſt upright diſpoſition, rendered her infinitely eſtimable; but never having lived in the world, ſhe had few accompliſhments, and all the failings that are commonly acquired in the country; when with moderate abilities, little taſte for reading, a great name, and a conſiderable fortune, a woman has been accuſtomed to domineer, and in the habit of ſeeing none but her inferiors. Imperious and irritable, ſhe had fallen out with all the gentlemen who lived in the neighbourhood, and her ſociety conſiſted only of people of a ſituation in life very inferior to hers, and principally of prieſts and canons, who were ſucceſſively dropping in from the ſmall neighbouring towns, in order to take up their reſidence at La M** for months together.

A kind of life ſo different from that which I had hitherto led, appeared to me inſupportable, the more eſpecially as my aunt forbad me not only to read novels; but ſhe alſo proſcribed dramatic pieces without exception, and even all poetry; ſhe allowed me to cultivate muſic and painting; at the ſame time ſhe appeared exceſſively ſhocked at my dexterity in archery, and my agility in running. She, in a ſevere tone, ordered me to renounce theſe two recreations. This prohibition appeared to me ridiculous; and, not having it in my power to diſobey her in regard to the article of reading, for want of books, I took a great pleaſure in revenging myſelf, in ſome meaſure, for this privation, by continuing to exerciſe myſelf privately in running and archery. I concealed a bow and arrows; I robbed myſelf of two hours' ſleep, in order to get up before my aunt, and be able to take a race in the garden and ſhoot with my bow. This was

my

my only amuſement, which made me conceive ſuch a fondneſs for theſe two exerciſes, that I ended by excelling in them. Thus it was that a childiſh ſeverity began to give me a taſte for myſtery and intrigue.

I was fourteen years old when Madame de S****, now Counteſs d'Olbreuſe, came with her former huſband, and for the firſt time, into Normandy to a country-ſeat newly purchaſed, and in the neighbourhood of ours. It was a great event for me, to ſee the arrival of one of our female relations, young, amiable, and full of grace and gaiety. My aunt received her rather coolly; ſhe thought there was too much elegance in her dreſs, and too much levity in her manners; and ſhe forbad me to form any intimacy with her. Madame de S**** ſhewed me the warmeſt friendſhip; I returned it with tranſport; I informed her of the prohibition of my aunt, and we agreed to employ the

the greateſt myſtery in our connexion; this rendered it more attractive and more endearing. We took for our confidant my aunt's gardener. Madame de S**** lent me novels which were entruſted to his care; he procured us an infinite number of private appointments; every morning as ſoon as I awoke, I let fly from my window, to a deſtined mark, an arrow to which was faſtened a note that the gardener picked up and carried to Madame de S****. She anſwered me punctually, and ſent me flowers, birds, &c. We were inceſſantly taken up with each other, and had agreed on a ſingular manner of wiſhing one another good night every evening: on entering my room to go to bed, I, at ten o'clock preciſely, opened the window of a cabinet that faced the country; and, a few minutes after, I ſaw aſcend into the air a ſky-rocket which was fired from Madame de S****'s houſe: at this ſignal I called out: "*Good night!*"

"*night!*" .... I ſtretched out my arms, and I *embraced* my female friend; and never were our real embraces ſo affectionate as this kiſs given by the imagination. I never perceived this ſky-rocket without ſtarting and being moved, an impreſſion which was not made on me even by the preſence of Madame de S****. This unveils all the magic of love which owes its dangerous power only to an imagination inflamed and inceſſantly kept in play by myſtery and intrigue.

This cloſe and cordial intercourſe of friendſhip laſted for upwards of ſix months ſucceſſively without a moment's relaxation; but, in the preſence of my aunt, we had, reciprocally, the air of the greateſt indifference.

My brother came to La M**, towards the end of the autumn; we let him into our confidence, and he faithfully kept our ſecret. But indulging himſelf with Madame de S**** in many pleaſantries reſpecting

reſpecting my aunt's kind of life and ſociety, theſe jeers were remarked; my aunt was pleaſed to excuſe them in her nephew; but ſhe was implacable towards Madame de S****, and had with her an irreconcileable quarrel. A ſhort time after, Madame de S**** returned to Paris. She left me a large ſtock of novels depoſited at the gardener's, and ſhe pointed out to me the means of writing to her privately and often.

Madame de S****'s abſence occaſioned me more chagrin than tireſomeneſs; for I wrote volumes to her; and this occupation, her letters, and the reading of novels by ſtealth, left no void in my life. However, my intercourſe with Madame de S**** furniſhed me unfortunately but with too many ſubjects for meditation.

She had frequently exhorted me not to ſuffer myſelf to be ſacrificed to cupidity and ambition, repeating to me that being

one

one of the greateſt matches about court, I ought to chooſe a man of a family equal to mine, who was worthy of being loved, and prefer him even though he ſhould have no fortune. In pointing out to me ſeveral perſons, ſhe mentioned to me Henri d'Elvas, the younger brother of the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe; ſhe told me that ſhe was not perſonally acquainted with him; but that ſhe had heard the greateſt encomiums paſſed on his perſon, his underſtanding, and his diſpoſition; ſhe related to me ſeveral anecdotes which charmed me. This name of *Henri d'Elvas*, which appeared to me to reſemble that of the hero of a Spaniſh novel, remained uppermoſt in my thoughts. My female friend had never ſeen him; but the more vague was the romantic idea that was given me of him, the greater field did it afford to my imagination; I could create to myſelf a chimera at my pleaſure; the moſt charming,

ing, real, and circumſtantial portrait would to me have been leſs dangerous.

I remained fifteen months longer at La M**. At the expiration of that time, my aunt, who was ſeventy-three years of age, and had been for ſome months paſt attacked by a languiſhing diſorder which alike weakened her body and mind, wiſhed to remove from the vicinity of the ſea for the change of air. We ſet out for Paris, where we ſtaid three weeks, during which it was out of my power to ſee Madame de S****; but we wrote to each other every day.

My aunt learning that a very celebrated ſort of quack had then retired to Senlis, after having made a pretty conſiderable fortune, was determined to go and put herſelf under his direction; and we ſet off for Senlis: I was then ſixteen!.... Madame de S**** having become a widow at this period, hired a pretty

houſe

houſe near the gates of the town, and took up her abode there ſolely on my account.

As my aunt had preſerved for her the greateſt antipathy, we could only ſee each other myſteriouſly. Madame de S**** had none of the ſervants that ſhe had in Normandy, becauſe, with the exception of a *femme-de-chambre*, ſhe had taken thither only her huſband's domeſtics; hers had remained in Paris, ſo that not a ſoul in her houſe knew me, which gave me the idea of paſſing there under another name. In the ſtreet where we lodged, lived an old notary, named Dercy. This man, who was guardian to a young girl of ſeventeen, called *Camille*, with whom he was in love, lived very retired, and kept his ward in the ſtrangeſt captivity; ſhe ſaw no one, and never ſtirred out, not even to go to church; her guardian had a chapel in his houſe, where he cauſed maſs to be ſaid every Sunday; and Camille was pre-

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ſent on this occaſion in a ſort of latticed pew; ſhe walked out only in the garden belonging to the houſe; in ſhort, ſhe was truly a priſoner. I thought of taking her name in order to go to Madame de S****'s. Her ſervants all believed that I was Camille Dercy, eſcaped by ſtealth from her guardian's houſe, in order to come and ſee their miſtreſs; they were enjoined not to ſpeak of theſe viſits, but I feared not even their indiſcretion, ſince the name of Camille afforded me the certainty that this myſtery would never be diſcovered by my aunt.

As my aunt could neither walk nor go out, and as, from a dreadful reſtleſſneſs, ſhe ſlept only in the day-time, and roſe exceſſively late, I diſpoſed at my pleaſure of all my mornings. Her ſervants ſeeing her in a dying condition, looked up only to me, her ſole heireſs; and I found in them all the complaiſance and diſcretion that I could poſſibly wiſh for. I went out alone

alone every morning, ſaying that I was going to walk in a neighbouring garden; they did not follow me, and they took good care not to inform my aunt of theſe frequent excurſions. In order to go to the houſe of my female friend, I had only to croſs two ſtreets, little frequented, and then a ſmall wood; and I always made this trip with a large veil which entirely covered my face. From my firſt viſit, Madame de S **** ſpoke to me of Henri d'Elvas, and ſhe read me two charming letters from him, addreſſed to his brother. Theſe letters diſplayed a great character, a cultivated underſtanding, and the moſt refined ſoul. Henri d'Elvas there rejected a propoſal of marriage with a rich heireſs deſtitute of graces and accompliſhments; he added that his heart was ſtill free; but that nothing would induce him to marry without inclination. In ſhort, Madame de S **** owned to me that ſhe loved

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the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe, that ſhe ſhould marry him as ſoon as ſhe was out of mourning; and that nothing would be wanting to her felicity, if ſhe joined to the happineſs of uniting herſelf to her lover that of having me for a ſiſter-in-law.

This confidence and the letters of Henri d'Elvas completely turned my brain. Madame de S **** proteſted to me that ſhe had never ſaid a ſingle word to the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe of the wiſh ſhe felt relative to his brother and me; becauſe it might be poſſible that Henri d'Elvas's perſon might not pleaſe me, and, in this uncertainty, ſhe had not choſen to run the riſk of giving the Chevalier a falſe hope. I requeſted Madame de S **** to obſerve always the ſame diſcretion; ſhe gave me her word that ſhe would; and, unfortunately for me, ſhe kept it but too faithfully.

A very few days after this converſation, ſhe informed me, with the greateſt joy, that the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe would come to her houſe that very evening, with Henri d'Elvas, who was recently arrived from Breſt. On this news my emotion was extreme; and I immediately conceived the romantic idea of availing myſelf of my borrowed name of *Camille*, in order to make acquaintance with Henri d'Elvas. I wiſhed to be loved for my own ſake: Henri d'Elvas had no fortune, while I was, at that moment, the richeſt match about court. I fully imagined that, having a few perſonal charms, the man whom I ſhould chooſe would not refuſe me; but I was not to be ſatisfied by a ſimple preference; I wanted paſſion*; and I could not

* On this dangerous rock many a tender-hearted fair one is caſt away. The man, who pleaſes her eye, appears to her a perfect character: when once blinded by paſſion, ſhe becomes incapable of diſcerning

not convince myſelf of a ſentiment that ſhould anſwer to the one which I myſelf was capable of feeling, but by ſtripping myſelf, to outward appearance, of all the advantages that might dazzle and influence ambition. I communicated my project to my female friend; ſhe too, having naturally a romantic turn of mind, approved of my idea, which to her appeared charming; and ſhe made me the moſt ſolemn oaths to keep my ſecret with ſuch ſcrupulous fidelity, that even the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe could not have the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion.

That very day my ſiſter-in-law, the Dutcheſs de Roſmond, being ſettled in a country-ſeat twelve miles from Senlis, came

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cerning his moſt glaring defects; and, with a trifling variation, ſhe applies to him what a lover applied to his miſtreſs:

"*He* has no faults, or I no faults can ſpy,
"*He* is all beauty, or all blindneſs I."

came to ſee my aunt; I ſpoke to her in private, in order to conjure her to render me a ſervice to which I attached the greateſt value: ſhe conſented, and, as we had agreed, ſhe aſked my aunt leave to take me with her for five or ſix days, promiſing to bring me back herſelf on the day appointed. Permiſſion was granted; and it was decided that I ſhould neither take a man-ſervant nor a *femme-de-chambre*; the Dutcheſs took me into her carriage, and, according to her promiſe, carried me to Madame de S****'s, to whom ſhe made but a ſhort viſit of a quarter of an hour; and then left me in this dangerous abode!..... Two ſervants, merely let into a half-confidence, knew that *Camille Dercy* would paſs ſix days at their miſtreſs's houſe, concealed in a room on the ground-floor which faced the garden. The little drawing-room, in which ſhe moſtly lived, was ſeparated from my apartment only by a glaſs-door covered with

with a ſilk curtain, placed on my ſide; ſo that I could, without being perceived, ſee all that paſſed in the drawing-room, and even hear all that was ſaid. I had been an hour at Madame de S****'s; it was dark; and candles had juſt been lighted in the drawing-room, when we heard the ſmacking of the poſtilions' whips; this noiſe reſounded to the very bottom of my heart! .... Madame de S**** immediately left the drawing-room; I darted into my chamber, double-locked the door, and riveted my eyes on that of the drawing-room which was oppoſite to me!.... At the expiration of a few minutes, I ſaw the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe and his friend enter! .... I knew not either of them; but I knew that the Chevalier was neither tall nor handſome..... Madame de S**** had ſo perfectly deſcribed him to me that I could not miſtake him. He appeared the firſt .... he was

followed by a young man whoſe figure had ſo much nobleneſs and elegance that it was impoſſible not to be ſtruck by it.

The perfect regularity of his features, the ſweetneſs and the expreſſion of his countenance, the graces ſpread over his whole perſon, rendered his beauty equally intereſting and remarkable. I eaſily recognized the pretended brother of Chevalier d'Olbreuſe whom I ſhall conſtantly call *Henri!* ..... The Chevalier went out, Henri remained alone. I then opened the door of my chamber, and entered the drawing-room! .... I advanced in ſilence towards a table from the drawer of which I took a book..... I attracted all Henri's attention; we bowed to each other, and our eyes met! Never had ſuch a look been fixed on me; it ſeemed to me that I was looked at for the firſt time in my life; and I found that all that can be ſaid moſt flattering and moſt ſweet, cannot be compared

pared to an expreſſive look*. I diſappeared without having ſaid a word.... but I carried with me an indelible impreſſion. I returned into my own room, and, ſtill in the dark, I remained cloſe behind the curtain that concealed me. Madame de S**** and the Chevalier came in. After the firſt compliments, they ſat down round the fire, Henri was

* No doubt, when both parties are equally proficient in the ſilent language of love, this mute converſation may afford the higheſt enjoyment: but, if one of them be unacquainted with it, the eloquence of the other muſt be loſt; as has been aptly obſerved by the author of *Tithon et Aurore*, in the following ſtanza:

" *Le langage des yeux eſt d'un charmant uſage;*
" *A des cœurs unis il offre mille appas:*
" *Mais à quoi ſert ce langage,*
" *Si l'un des deux ne l'entend pas?*"

However, it ſeems that Mademoiſelle de Roſmond was no novice in this language; for, though but "*ſweet ſixteen*," ſhe underſtood the expreſſion of the ſuppoſed *Henri*'s looks *à merveille*.—*Tranſlator's Note*.

placed oppoſite to me; with what emotion I heard the ſound of his voice! with what attention I liſtened to all he ſaid!.... I remarked that he was abſent, that he had his eyes inceſſantly fixed on the door of my room, and that, at the ſmalleſt noiſe, he turned his head towards the other door, as if he had expected ſome one..... I imagined that I was the object of this uneaſineſs; and nothing more was neceſſary to perſuade me that his heart already anſwered to mine!.... I ſupped alone in my apartment; and, when they re-entered the drawing-room, I extinguiſhed my light..... Henri, ſtill abſent in his mind, did not ſit down, but all on a ſudden ſtopping before the glazed door, I found myſelf ſeparated from him only by the thickneſs of the glaſs. Addreſſing himſelf to Madame de S****, he aſked her, "Whether this door opened "into *an inhabited apartment?*"—"No," anſwered Madame de S****, "it is "only

"only a ſmall cabinet in which my clothes "are locked up." .... Henri aſked no more queſtions; he even ceaſed to ſpeak, and in the courſe of half an hour, he went to bed.

Madame de S**** came and chatted with me before ſhe retired to her bed-chamber. She augmented my enthuſiaſm by her own; ſhe repeated to me that ſince my aunt had been in a ſtate of imbecility, my brother having cauſed himſelf to be appointed my guardian, I no longer depended on any one but him; and that therefore I ſhould be the abſolute miſtreſs of my fate, ſince my brother was incapable of putting any conſtraint on my inclination. Theſe reflections completely proved my ruin; we looked on this project of an union as a thing ſo certain that, from this moment, Madame de S**** no longer called me by any other name than that of ſiſter. During the whole night, I cloſed not my eyes for an inſtant.

I made verſes; *I arranged the plan of a romance* *, the ſole object of which was to aſtoniſh and captivate the object that had juſt acquired ſo fatal an aſcendency over my imagination and my heart!.... I ſhall not give an account of the follies with which I was inſpired by the moſt violent paſſion, joined to the certainty that nothing in the world could oppoſe it!.... I gave way to my feelings with as much impetuoſity as confidence.... Blinded by the moſt fatal prepoſſeſſion, I took the aſtoniſhment which I excited, for a tender return..... I fully remarked that Henri had promiſed himſelf not to make me a confeſſion of his love.... this obſervation augmented my eſteem... he thought that he was beloved only by a girl of neither fortune nor family; he was not of an age to diſpoſe of his hand without the conſent of his parents, and would not

* For this romance or ſong *ſee* vol. ii. page 247 and 248.

ſeduce

ſeduce a young girl whom he could not marry. So the reſerve which he ſhewed towards me ſerved only to ſtrengthen my ſentiments! .... I had given myſelf the age of Camille ſeventeen, and I was but *ſixteen*; I thought that the pretended Henri d'Elvas was only two and twenty; and he did not look to be more! .... At length ſeduced by appearances, by the advice which I received, and, above all, by my own heart, wiſhing abſolutely under the name of Camille to triumph over the virtuous reſiſtance that was oppoſed to me, I ventured to declare without diſguiſe an inclination which I believed to be lawful! .... This moment of weakneſs and error has left in my memory only a frightful recollection! .... The fatal object of my inconſiderate paſſion was hurried away by a fleeting impreſſion; I took the wandering of reaſon for the delirium of love; and to this I yielded! ....

Brought to myſelf by ſhame and remorſe, I learnt at the ſame inſtant the horrible truth!..... I ſaw myſelf diſhonoured without being loved; and I forfeited at once both my own eſteem and every hope of happineſs and tranquillity!.... The moſt violent deſpair led me in a few days to the brink of the grave. Madame de S**** came and ſat up with me two nights unknown to my aunt. I was ſtill affected by her friendſhip; but I no longer ſaw her but with a ſort of pain; I felt not the ſmalleſt temptation to entruſt to her my misfortune; my withered heart was ſhut againſt confidence!... When I was in a condition to get up and go out, I ſtill pretended to be ill, in order that I might diſpenſe with going to Madame de S****'s. However, I was obliged to determine on returning thither! She ſpoke to me again of Henri d'Elvas; I anſwered in ſuch a manner as to perſuade her merely

that

that I was grown cool on this ſubject.... and, under different pretexts, I ceaſed almoſt entirely to viſit her.

I fell into a melancholy and a lowneſs of ſpirits that made me ſtupid; by loſing every thing that could occupy my heart and my imagination, it ſeemed to me that I had loſt all the faculties of my ſoul and mind. I was in an habitual ſtate of agitation and ſtupor; but I did not reflect; I was no longer myſelf; I no longer exiſted, I ſuffered only mechanically.

I ſhould have been much leſs to be pitied, had my misfortune been occaſioned by an artful and treacherous ſeduction; then I ſhould have been inexcuſable, and I might have hated!.... my ſoul would have preſerved ſome energy; and contempt would have healed the moſt painful wound of my heart!.... But I could accuſe no one but myſelf; I could not complain without renewing all the horror of the moſt tormenting, yet ſuperfluous regrets, and of the

the moſt bitter repentance!.... Thus not daring to contemplate my ſituation, or caſt back my eyes on the paſt, ſtained by an irreparable fault, no longer ſeeing any future proſpect, not being able either to preſerve hope or form any projects, my life was now nothing but a painful ſtate of vegetation!....

Alas! ſhutting my eyes on the bottom of the labyrinth into which I had fallen, freed at leaſt from the torments occaſioned by a melancholy foreſight, become almoſt inſenſible through the very exceſs of grief; with me, a frightful conſternation ſupplied the place of reſignation and courage.

Oh! by what horrible convulſion was I to be drawn from this overwhelming lethargy!

At the expiration of a few months I perceived, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that I bore within me the fatal pledge of my diſhonour!...This ſentiment ſo ſweet, which, in lawful bonds, muſt inſpire the delightful hope of doubling one's exiſtence, was to me only a terrible ſubject of con-

fuſion

fuſion and fright! However, in the midſt of vain regrets and of the terrors of deſpair, the powerful voice of nature ſpoke home to my diſmayed heart; it enjoined me to endure ſhame, and to live!

Not being able to make up my mind to entruſt ſuch a ſecret, and feeling that it would be impoſſible for me to diſpenſe with advice, ſuccour, and a guide in ſuch a ſituation, an intereſt a thouſand times dearer than that of my life and character, made me form the reſolution of writing to the author of my troubles!.... I will own it: I loved him ſtill; and the condition I was in, depriving me of hope, had revived all the violence of this fatal inclination. Notwithſtanding honour and the laws, which ſeparated us for ever, a dear and ſacred tie ſtill united us; and the ſentiments of nature renewed in my torn heart all the torments of an unfortunate paſſion!.... A *valet-de-chambre*, named Le Maire was ſent to me ſeveral times.

He

He did not know me. I received him at the houſe of a woman on whom I could depend; but from whom I had, however, concealed my real name. I found that Le Maire was not deficient in intelligence and underſtanding; an exceſſive curioſity, inſpired by love and jealouſy, made me paſſionately wiſh to be informed of every thing that related to Madame d'Erneville! .... I queſtioned Le Maire; he anſwered me with the greateſt minuteneſs, and made me the moſt merited panegyric on his virtuous miſtreſs: while extolling to me her charming talents, and her ſenſibility, he told me that ſhe was extravagantly fond of children, that ſhe ardently wiſhed to have a daughter, and that ſhe often repeated that, if heaven did not give her any, ſhe would adopt one. He added, that ſhe was a mother to all the orphans on her eſtate; and that her greateſt pleaſure was to pick up and take care of thoſe who were frequently expoſed at the gates of her man-

ſion.

ſion. Theſe accounts gave birth in my mind to the ſtrangeſt idea imaginable. Not being myſelf able to take charge of my unfortunate child, it would have been very pleaſing to me to know that it was in ſuch hands, and brought up under the eyes of its father!.... but I was ſenſible that the huſband of a woman ſo worthy of being loved, could not propoſe to her to take charge of the unfortunate fruit of an act of adultery!.... and that even though he ſhould tell her that this child was not his, it would be eaſily divined, and that this ſuſpicion might cauſe a fatal ſeparation. I therefore, from that time, thought of entruſting my child to *Pauline* alone, without letting her huſband into this ſecret. Beſides, I could not give my child to its father, without entering into an engagement of preſerving for ever the cloſeſt intercourſe, and the moſt intimate connexions with him whom I ought to forget!.... This reflection completely determined me.

I at

I at firſt formed but a vague plan, without finding any means for its execution; I thought only, from all that was told me of Pauline, that, by preſenting to her my child in an intereſting and romantic manner, ſhe would certainly take charge of it; and I irrevocably fixed on this idea.

However, in the firſt moments of embarraſſment and fright, I had promiſed Monſieur d'Erneville to deliver to him the child; being afterwards decided to do nothing of the kind, it was neceſſary to deceive him in this reſpect; I was obliged to have recourſe to Madame de S****; I revealed to her all. Her grief was inexpreſſible. She had, no doubt, but too much contributed to lead me aſtray by her advice, her giddineſs, and her levity; but, after having been to me the moſt dangerous of confidants, ſhe became the moſt faithful and moſt uſeful of friends. She wiſhed to take charge of my child: I obſerved to her that this would be riſking

my

my ſecret; beſides, I did not care that it ſhould be brought up by her .... in ſhort, I perſiſted in my project. I alſo conſulted her reſpecting a thing which occaſioned me urgent remorſe. I would rather have died than have declared my real name to Monſieur d'Erneville; but I felt a ſcruple, too well-founded, in ſuffering him to believe for ever that I was Camille Dercy. After my error, it was calumniating that young girl. I wiſhed therefore to make Monſieur d'Erneville change his opinion on this point, without diſcovering to him who I was. Madame de S**** oppoſed this confeſſion with the greateſt energy; and ſhe fixed my determination, by informing me that Camille, far from being a virtuous young woman, had already had ſeveral intrigues which beſpoke the moſt depraved morals. The Chevalier d'Olbreuſe, whom I was obliged to let into the ſecret, was of Madame de S****'s opinion; and I yielded to the advice

advice of two perſons who had over me all the aſcendency that can be acquired by friendſhip, and by ſervices of the moſt important nature.

Towards the end of September, my aunt, who was ſtill growing worſe, fell into a real ſtate of imbecility. At this period, I again ſaw Le Maire, who, always queſtioned by me, told me that a *femme-de-chambre* of Madame d'Erneville frequently wrote to him, and informed him that her miſtreſs was very much tempted to make a little trip to Paris. On this, I formed a very ſingular plan which I did not communicate to my friends till after the moſt mature reflections, and after having perfectly made ſure of Le Maire, whom I gained over by making him promiſes which I ſhall detail in the ſequel. He ſerved me with as much intelligence as diſcretion; but he knew not who I was till after I quitted Senlis.

However,

However, the ſituation of my aunt determined my family to transfer me to other hands. My brother being declared my guardian, became my ſole maſter. I eaſily obtained permiſſion from him to go and paſs a few months at Madame de S****'s, who purchaſed a houſe at Fontenay-aux-Roſes, where I took up my abode with her. My brother, who was always in Paris or at Verſailles, came thither but twice. His wife did not come at all; I complained of a great derangement of health which authorized a certain negligence in my dreſs; and my brother had not the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of the truth .... beſides, Madame de S**** received but very litttle company; and I never appeared when any viſiters dropped in. She had ſent into the country to one of her eſtates, the ſervants who had ſeen me at Senlis under the name of *Camille*; for, at Fontenay, I went by my real name.

In

In the mean time, the fatal period was approaching! Le Maire executed all that I had preſcribed to him: he wrote to Jacinthe that his maſter would ſtill remain a long time in Paris; that he durſt not ſend for his wife, becauſe the Counteſs Dowager d'Erneville did not chooſe it; in ſhort, that he was ill, and wiſhed for *Pauline*. Le Maire, after having, by my orders, looked for an apartment ſuitable to my intention, hired one in the *Hôtel des Prouvaires*, becauſe there was in it a ſingular cloſet, which opened at the back, and faced a private ſtair-caſe, a contrivance that had, in fact, been made by a Swediſh lady who had paſſed five months in this hotel. Every thing being thus diſpoſed, the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe went to Monſieur d'Erneville, to whom he ſaid that *Camille*, after having publicly ſpent ſome time at Madame de S****'s, had pretended to leave her houſe; but that ſhe had remained concealed in it. The Che-

valier added that Madame de S**** had ſeveral perſons belonging to her family on a viſit to her; but that Camille being lodged in a ſeparate pavilion could neither be perceived, nor ſuſpected by any one whatever.

In conſequence of theſe precautions, I had nothing to apprehend, even had Monſieur d'Erneville diſcovered that *Mademoiſelle du Roſmond* was at Madame de S****'s; but this, I believe, is what he did not know; for he had no communication with Madame de S****'s ſervants; and as ſoon as he arrived at Fontenay, I wholly ceaſed to ſtir out of my room.

Wiſhing to entruſt my child to Pauline, it was neceſſary to give another to Monſieur d'Erneville. When ſome certain prognoſtics announced to me that, within a few days, I ſhould be a mother, the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe brought from the found-ling-hoſpital, in Paris, a child newly born

born .... and, eight and forty hours after its arrival at Fontenay, Léocadie was brought into the world! .... On receiving her into my arms, I experienced an inexpreſſible ſentiment of tenderneſs, joy, and grief. There took place in my heart an inconceivable revolution; ſhame was ſtifled; love was baniſhed; nature ſupplied the place of every thing, and filled it entirely! "O! God," exclaimed I, ſhedding a flood of tears, "can I con-"ſent to part from ſo dear an object? "Can I exiſt without my child? ....

From that moment, the idea of tranſferring it to ſtrange hands wrung my heart; and all my reſolutions, in this reſpect, were ſhaken.

I wiſhed that my child ſhould receive a paternal benediction; and I thought it my duty to procure her father the happineſs of embracing her at the moment of her birth. He believed that he was the father of a boy; but I cauſed to be dictated to him

him the form of a bleſſing that was equally ſuitable to a girl.... He was in a very dark cabinet; I really ſent him his child; Léocadie was in his arms; and ſhe was brought back to me bathed with his tears!

In the mean time, every thing had ſucceeded to the utmoſt of my wiſhes; and the Marchioneſs d'Erneville had been in Paris for ſeveral days, and in the lodging that I had cauſed to be taken for her. Madame d'Olbreuſe preſſed me to ſend away my child; and ſhe herſelf was to carry it to Paris; how great was her aſtoniſhment, when I declared to her that I had changed my intention, and meant to keep my little girl! She repeated to me in vain that I ſhould ruin myſelf; I anſwered her that I was determined never to marry; and that, after the fault of which I was guilty, I ſhould not heſitate to ſacrifice my reputation to the happineſs of bringing up my own child. Then the Chevalier d'Ol-

breuſe and Madame de S**** repreſented to me that my family would never ſuffer me to diſhonour myſelf in this manner; that if I made ſuch a piece of work, or only if, without declaring my misfortune, I perſiſted in wiſhing to keep my child, my relations would take it away from me by force, in order to put it into an hoſpital, where, confounded for ever among ſo many other unfortunate beings, I ſhould never be able either to claim or recognize it. This idea made me ſhudder. Madame de S****, a few months before, had propoſed to me, on the ſpur of the moment, to take charge of my child; but, enraptured then with the romantic plan which I had formed, I refuſed this offer. I reminded her of it; for the hope of ſeeing my child often made me at length prefer this laſt courſe. It was now too late; the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe would by no means conſent to it; and Madame de

de S****, in all things, conformed to his will.

I was therefore under the neceſſity of recurring to my firſt plan. In vain were extolled to me the diſpoſition, the talents, and the ſenſibility of Pauline; in vain was I aſſured that means would be found to let me hear frequently of my child; I determined on this frightful ſacrifice through deſpair alone! It was by the Chevalier's advice that, in the note placed in the cradle, I did not put the real date of the birth of Léocadie, who was born on the 18th of February; the date of the note made her a few days younger.

I had, without difficulty, come to the reſolution of having my child brought up without giving her a wet nurſe. I was quite familiarized with this idea; for I had been brought up in this manner, as well as my brother; and we both enjoyed excellent health. But I cannot deſcribe the ſituation in which Madame de S****

left me, when, after having torn my daughter from my arms, ſhe fled with this precious truſt in order to repair to Paris. This happened in the evening after ſupper!.... I was in my bed; I had not yet been allowed to get up. I had in my room no one but the nurſe.... I directed my curtains to be drawn, that I might weep without conſtraint. At the expiration of two or three hours, I conceived an irreſiſtible deſire to viſit the little room in which Léocadie had paſſed ſome nights, and to weep over her cradle which I had wiſhed to preſerve; I had cauſed another to be bought for conveying her to Paris! I partly undrew my curtain; and, ſeeing that my nurſe was in a ſound ſleep, I roſe quite ſoftly, took my night lamp, went out of my chamber, croſſed a gallery, and entered the little cabinet that had been occupied by my daughter. The midwife, who had attended me, ſlept in it; ſhe was faſt aſleep..... I advanced without

without making a noiſe; and when I perceived the cradle, my heart was moved and wrung! I approached it; I went on my knees; I lifted up the curtain, and I ſtarted on ſeeing a charming child that was faſt aſleep!... It was Stephen, who had been placed in this cradle!.... Oh! what an impreſſion did the ſight of a child of Léocadie's age make on me!.... "Unhap-
"py child!" exclaimed I: "thy culpable
"mother, like me, was compelled alſo to
"abandon thee! ſhe laments thee, no
"doubt, or, more fortunate than me, per-
"haps ſhe has loſt her life in giving life
"to thee!.... and I exiſt to ſuffer with-
"out hope and without conſolation!.....
"All the affections that conſtitute the
"happineſs of life have to me been only
"frightful ſnares, dangerous illuſions, and
"eternal ſubjects of ſhame and grief: the
"advice of friendſhip led me aſtray; love
"makes my diſgrace.... and maternal
"tenderneſs is to me only a torment!....

"My daughter would conſole me for "every thing! Her preſence could alone "calm this agitated heart, and dry up the "bitter tears which repentance makes me "ſhed!.... and I have loſt her!.... "They have the barbarity to take her "from me!".... My ſobs interrupted my ſpeech.... The woman who ſlept in the cabinet, awoke; I ordered her to take Stephen into her bed; it ſeemed to me that a ſtrange child would profane this cradle, which to me was become ſacred!.... I deſired it to be carried into my room, and placed within the curtains of my bed; I kept it there all the time that I ſtaid at Fontenay; and, in the ſequel, I cauſed it to be conveyed to La M**, where it ſtill is.

Madame de S**** returned from Paris at five o'clock in the morning. She related to me that, by means of Le Maire, and directed by him, ſhe had herſelf put the child in the place where it was to be expoſed;

expoſed; and that, being concealed behind the cloſet for upwards of two hours, ſhe had heard all that had paſſed in the Marchioneſs d'Erneville's apartment. In ſhort, ſhe told me that my Léocadie was accepted with tranſport and rapture!.... During this recital, I melted into tears; the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe calmed me a little, by adviſing me to ſend Raimond into Burgundy, in order to inquire after my child. Raimond was a young man with whom a beneficent action of Monſieur d'Erneville had brought us acquainted. Raimond, by his virtues and the moſt uncommon honeſty, had gained all my confidence; I had married him to a young girl whom he loved; I took the latter into my ſervice; and I took them both into my confidence. But as Raimond was known to Monſieur d'Erneville, I had ſent him to a country-ſeat belonging to Madame de S****, not chooſing to keep him near me as long as Monſieur d'Erneville ſhould remain at

Fontenay. The Chevalier d'Olbreuſe undertook to ſend him directions to go into Burgundy, in order to make there the moſt minute inquiries reſpecting every thing that intereſted me ſo warmly. He diſguiſed himſelf, performed this journey, and brought me back as favourable an account as I could deſire. Léocadie, who arrived in perfect health at Erneville caſtle, was adored by her adoptive mother!.... I remained ſix weeks longer at Fontenay after Monſieur d'Erneville's departure. Le Maire, concealed in Paris in the houſe of Madame de S****, was then recommended by the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe to the Marquis de ***, who was going as ambaſſador to the Court of Naples. As my friends lent me whatever money I had occaſion for, I purchaſed Le Maire's ſilence and diſcretion by an annuity of fifty louis for life; and he ſet off for Italy, where he has taken up his abode, and ſettled in buſineſs.

I quitted

I quitted Madame de S**** in the month of April; my ſiſter-in-law came for me and took me with her to her houſe. My aunt had been brought back to Paris. I went to ſee her; ſhe had now loſt her ſenſes, yet ſhe recollected me; I ſaw that ſhe was entirely abandoned to the mercenary perſons about her; and I came to a reſolution to remain with her, and devote myſelf to attend and ſerve her. My brother and his wife in vain combated this intention. I fixed myſelf at my aunt's; I ſlept in her room, and I no longer quitted her. I lived there in abſolute ſolitude: this kind of life agreed perfectly with my ſituation; I was performing a duty; I wanted to be reconciled with myſelf!..... I renounced frivolous reading; I occupied my mind; I cultivated my talents; and time glided away for me without *ennui*, but not without inquietude and chagrin!... My daughter, ever preſent to my thoughts, was to me an

inexhauſtible ſubject of agitation, fear, and grief. I ſent Raimond again into Burgundy towards the end of the ſummer, and I charged him to gain over Jacinthe, *femme-de-chambre* of Madame d'Erneville. Raimond acquitted himſelf of this commiſſion with his uſual zeal and intelligence. Jacinthe never knew who I was; but ſhe accepted the penſion that was offered her, and promiſed to ſend punctually every week a particular account of Léocadie. Raimond left her an addreſs; he received her letters, and brought them to me. This well-eſtabliſhed and perfectly regular correſpondence procured me the only real conſolation that I had yet received.

I buſied myſelf, four or five months beforehand, concerning the new-year's gifts that I wiſhed to ſend to Léocadie. The following month likewiſe preſented to me a very affecting period!.... On the 18th of February, Léocadie's birth-day, I proſtrated myſelf as ſoon as I awoke.

Inun-

.... Inundated with tears, I invoked God in behalf of my daughter with the moſt lively fervour.... Ah! no doubt, there is none that can be compared to that of a mother praying for her child!.... I promiſed to celebrate for ever that day by a good action; and I went and releaſed ſix poor artiſans confined in priſon for not having paid for the nurſing of their children.

It was much about this time that I became acquainted with the virtuous Biſhop of Autun; he was a relation of my aunt, and came ſometimes to ſee her; he inſpired me with the beſt founded veneration and the moſt affectionate attachment. I had always entertained pious ſentiments; but it is he who brought me acquainted with all the ſublimity of religion, which alone can give that perfection of principles, character, and conduct.

I had been eighteen months at my aunt's, when I loſt her; ſhe drew her

laſt breath in my arms .... By a will made four years previous to her death, I found myſelf univerſal heireſs of all her property. I went to live in my brother's houſe; and the Biſhop of Autun, then Abbé de *** was pleaſed to yield to our entreaties, and undertake the education of Jules, my nephew. A ſhort time after, I heard that Camille Dercy was engaged at the opera-houſe; which, in more than one way, occaſioned me a lively chagrin. She made ſo much noiſe by the charms of her perſon, that I fully imagined this event might, ſooner or later, be known by Monſieur d'Erneville. It was frightful to me to think he might believe that the unfortunate *Camille* was become a courtezan; to remain debaſed to ſuch a degree in his opinion was a painful diſgrace!.... Beſides, though Monſieur d'Olbreuſe had aſſured me that the Marquis's intention was to make no more journies to Paris, buſineſs might poſſibly compel him to return

return thither; and then, in going to public places, and ſeeing the real Camille, he would have diſcovered the greateſt part of the myſtery that I wiſhed to conceal from him. Time, without diſſipating my melancholy, had aſſuaged my grief; being now eaſy reſpecting the ſituation of my child, I again became attached to life, and conſequently to my reputation: I annexed the greateſt importance to a ſecret on which depended my honour and my peace of mind, and which had coſt me ſo much trouble and made me contrive intrigues ſo complicated. In ſhort, I had ſolemnly given my word to my friends, not only to entruſt it to no one without their conſent, but to employ conſtantly all the reſources of my imagination to conceal it, and anticipate every thing that might betray it or cauſe it to be ſuſpected, and particularly by Monſieur d'Erneville. Madame d'Olbreuſe, who warmly reproached herſelf with the thoughtleſſneſs of her conduct,

duct, and the advice that had contributed to my ruin, was very much intereſted perſonally in aſſuring herſelf of my perfect diſcretion in this reſpect. She and her huſband could not ſee Camille on the ſtage but with real fright; yet chance ſoon afforded us the means of freeing ourſelves from this inquietude.

I ſaw at the houſe of my ſiſter-in-law none but our relations and a few friends of a certain age; when other viſiters were announced, I withdrew; and when the Dutcheſs gave great ſuppers, I remained in my own room. Beſides, I neither went to public places, nor to balls, nor did I mix in the great world. All that was ſaid to diſguſt me with this kind of life produced an effect abſolutely contrary; it was repeated to me, that no perſon at my age had this fondneſs for retirement and for ſerious ſtudies; that I was the object of univerſal aſtoniſhment; that, in ſhort, my character appeared inexplicable. This

conver-

converſation, I own, flattered me in ſecret; I had had a ſufficient glimpſe of the world to know that it neither requires real merit nor diſtinguiſhed talents to obtain their approbation, and that it is much more flattering to aſtoniſh than to pleaſe them.

My brother one day earneſtly requeſted me not to leave the drawing-room when the Count de Poligni, whom I thought his intimate friend, ſhould come to ſee the Dutcheſs. As I reſiſted this ſolicitation, my brother interrupting me, ſaid: "Don't "imagine that I have any deſire to pro- "poſe to you to marry Poligni. If you "were tempted to it, I ſhould do every "thing in my power to diſſuade you from "ſuch an intention!" Then my brother, to my no ſmall ſurpriſe, drew me a frightful picture of the character of the man with whom, of all others, he was the moſt intimate; yet he ended by renewing to me his requeſt not to avoid him, but even

to

to be friendly towards him. I imagined that ſome motive of ambition determined my brother to ſhew to the Count particular attention, and, certain that marriage would not be mentioned to me, I conſented to all that was required of me. In this manner I frequently ſaw the Count; and, a ſhort time after, I learnt that my brother had fallen out with him. I queſtioned my brother who told me in private, but without entering into any detail, that Poligni, the confidant of his love for Camille, had betrayed and ſupplanted him; that, after having ſeduced and run away with this young girl, he had made her accept an engagement at the opera-houſe. "But I am revenged," continued my brother; "I have, in my turn, ſupplanted "Poligni; and Camille is for ever loſt to "him." Being deſirous of turning this confidence to account, I conjured my brother to inſiſt that his new miſtreſs

ſhould

ſhould quit the ſtage; I added that, if ſhe remained at the opera-houſe, the Dutcheſs would ſoon hear of this criminal intrigue. My brother, determined not to abjure his wanderings, nevertheleſs reſpected the peace of mind of his virtuous wife; he yielded to my warm entreaties; and, in the courſe of a week, Camille quitted the ſtage.

I had a female couſin, a boarder in the abbey of Royaumont, ſome miles from Paris; I wiſhed to ſpend a few days with her; and I went thither towards the end of the month of Auguſt. I did not know this convent; it is very ancient and of a handſome ſtyle of architecture; I was, in particular, extremely ſtruck with the cloiſter which, like all thoſe of monaſteries, forms a vaſt gallery, covered, winding, and in arcades, in the middle of which is a large parterre full of flowers. This had an additional ornament of a very handſome fountain, of white marble, placed on the lawn of the parterre. The pure and limpid

water

water of the fountain noiſily precipitated itſelf into a large marble baſon, and thence fell again on the turf, where branching into ſmall canals dug for that purpoſe, it produced ſeveral rivulets which, after having traverſed the parterre, entered the cloiſter, and winded round the ſepulchral ſtones with which this place is filled.

Having ſupped with the abbeſs, I retired to my room at the hour when every one goes to bed in convents, and I began to write. At midnight I opened my window, and I found the weather ſo mild and ſo calm that I had a mind to go and take a walk. The moſt profound ſilence reigned throughout every part of the houſe; all the lamps were extinguiſhed; I traverſed a long and very dark gallery, at the end of which I ſtopped, no longer knowing where I was; and there I heard the murmuring of the fountain: I knew that I was near the cloiſter; thither it was that I wiſhed to go; and, guided by this noiſe,

I accord-

I accordingly arrived there. It was very warm, but the ſky, which was covered with clouds, was exceſſively gloomy; the parterre did not ſpread the ſmalleſt light in the cloiſter; darkneſs, ſilence, the murmuring of the water, and the idea that I was walking over graves, cauſed me ſome emotion. I was going to enter the parterre, when I diſtinctly heard ſome groans which ſeemed to come from the ſide of the fountain; I trembled, and, leaning againſt one of the pilaſters of the arcades, I remained motionleſs .... The groans continued .... at that moment the ſky became a little clear, and I perceived a female figure kneeling near the fountain, and reſting on a turf-ſeat .... I heard a a ſobbing voice, as ſweet as it was youthful.... "O! my God!" exclaimed ſhe, "ought I to complain of being thus re-"jected! .... this ſacred veil which I "am denied, I am unworthy to wear! "...., but where ſhall I find an aſylum?

"Abandoned

"Abandoned by all Nature, alone in the "world, what, alas! will become of me?" I liſtened no more: penetrated to the bottom of my ſoul, I darted into the parterre; the young female ſtranger roſe in a fright: "Diſpel your fears," ſaid I to her; "it is a friend who comes to your "aſſiſtance." .... At theſe words the *incognita*, ſobbing, threw herſelf into my arms. I preſſed her to my boſom, and we ſat down on the turf-ſeat. The darkneſs did not allow me to diſtinguiſh her features; but her misfortune, her ſenſibility, and the affecting ſweetneſs of her voice had made on my heart the deepeſt impreſſion. "Who are you?" aſked I.—"An "unfortunate orphan," anſwered ſhe, "without fortune, without protectors, and "I am but ſixteen! I came hither with "an intention of turning nun; but not "having it in my power to pay down a "ſum of money, by way of dowry, they "refuſe me, and will not even ſuffer me

"to

"to remain*." — "Well, I will take "you away with me; I take charge of "you; you ſhall be my companion."— The only anſwer that the unfortunate girl made me, was to throw herſelf at my feet, and ſqueeze my hand in hers, at the ſame time watering them with her tears: "No," ſaid ſhe, "I will not take an unfair ad- "vantage of ſuch generous pity!.... I "muſt own to you that I am unworthy of "your kindneſs.... this frightful misfor- "tune which affects you, is my own work! ".... it is a culpable weakneſs that oc- "caſioned it!"—"You have been in "love?"—"And I was deceived; I am "forſaken; there remains for me only "hopeleſs love, ſhame, and repentance." ..... An idea may be formed of the effect produced on me by theſe laſt

* Hence it appears, that if, in Switzerland, the maxim be *Point d'argent, point de Suiſſe*; ſo, in France, in thoſe monaſtic aſylums whoſe gates might be ſuppoſed to open, always *gratuitouſly*, to female devotees, it was *Point de dot, point de nonnain*."—*Tranſlator.*

words

words, which retraced to me my misfortune and my fault in ſo ſtriking a manner!.... "O! young and dear unfortunate girl!" cried I, preſſing her in my arms, "I be-"come your ſiſter; we will no longer "quit each other: come with me!".... My tears interrupted my ſpeech.... I roſe up and led away the ſtranger, who could expreſs her aſtoniſhment and gratitude only by ſobs and the moſt tender careſſes..... I returned to my room, where I had left a light. How much was ſo warm an intereſt, with which the ſtranger inſpired me, increaſed when I beheld her charming face!.... her countenance full of candour and ſenſibility, her extreme youth, the grace of her manners, the delicacy of her features and ſhape, every thing in her was calculated to intereſt and affect the moſt unfeeling heart! On looking at her, it was impoſſible to conceive the barbarity of him who could have abandoned and forgotten her!

The

The *incognita* related to me her hiſtory with the ingenuouſneſs that characterizes her. What was my indignation on learning that her ſeducer was the Count de Poligni!.... In ſhort, this unfortunate girl was that very Agnès, who has ſince refuſed to marry Poligni, becauſe ſhe would not quit me, and who, at this day, wiſhing to ſhare my deſtiny, ſacrifices her liberty, and irrevocably renounces the world, that ſhe may never be ſeparated from her female friend!

Two days after, I returned to Paris; I took with me my dear Agnès, thanking heaven that deigned to grant me the moſt valuable, and undoubtedly the rareſt of its favours, a real friend. I could gladly have wiſhed to entruſt to her my ſecret; but faithful to my word, I would not do it, without the approbation of Madame d'Olbreuſe, who poſitively refuſed the conſent which I ſolicited, ſaying that I ought not to let Agnès ſo much into

my

my confidence till after I had, for ſeveral years, experienced her attachment. In friendſhip, hearts which underſtand each other quickly, cannot be miſtaken *. The moſt certain proof is to ſympathize with each other perfectly before we know each other well: we ſhall never love dearly and conſtantly the object that we have occaſion to ſtudy.

Towards the end of the winter of this year, I received a piece of news which af-

* Here Madame de Genlis ſeems to have adopted the idea which a French dramatiſt puts into the mouth of a principal character in a tragedy, where he makes the perſonage ſay that hearts are united

"*Par ce* je ne ſais quoi *qu'on ne peut exprimer*;"

but the poet applied this to the paſſion of love: every one has heard of two perſons of different ſexes falling in love at firſt ſight; but, perhaps, none of our readers ever before heard of two perſons of the ſame ſex, *quickly*, or, as it were, at firſt ſight, *falling into friendſhip*. To form a laſting friendſhip, nothing is more neceſſary than the *ſtudy* of character, and that character muſt be founded on virtue.—*Tranſlator's Note.*

flicted me greatly; I was informed that Jacinthe was diſmiſſed from Erneville-caſtle; I was ignorant on what account; I learnt, a long time after, that it was in conſequence of a ſcene of jealouſy occaſioned by a ſeal which I had ſent to Léocadie. This ſeal was given me by my brother, who had it from Madame du Reſnel. The two *R*'s, engraved on the ſtone, chanced to form alſo my cypher. My brother made me promiſe not to part with this ſeal, or to give it only to the object that I ſhould *paſſionately* love. He ſuppoſed that a woman could not love in that manner any one but a lover. I privately beſpoke a ſeal abſolutely ſimilar, which I hung to my watch, and I ſent the other to Léocadie; by this artifice I deceived my brother, without breaking my word.

My friends, the Chevalier and Madame d'Olbreuſe, fearing, with reaſon, the vivacity of my imagination and the natural

impetuoſity of my character, carefully concealed from me every thing that could make me uneaſy or agitate me. They had taken the precaution to have Jacinthe apprized of this circumſtance by Raimond, whom they had made ſenſible of how much importance this myſtery was to my peace of mind; ſo that I did not really learn till after the expiration of ſeveral years, all the troubles in which the adoption of Léocadie had involved her generous benefactreſs; but at that time I had not the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion of them. I grieved at Jacinthe's diſgrace, only becauſe ſhe was no longer about my daughter's perſon. She took up her abode near Erneville, and continued regularly to ſend me tidings of Léocadie, which, although much more vague, ſtill tranquillized me at leaſt reſpecting the health of ſo dear an object.

My brother having inherited the country-ſeat where my grandmother had brought me up, wiſhed to go thither and ſpend

ſpend a part of the ſummer of 17**. I accompanied him on this journey, which the idea of ſeeing again Elbanie, my firſt female friend, rendered extremely agreeable to me: I found myſelf, not without emotion, once more in thoſe places where the peaceful days of my infancy had glided away.

The objects which ſtrongly retrace our youth, inſpire only painful ſenſations; they remind us of the wanderings of the paſſions which have agitated us, of illuſions vaniſhed, of pleaſures loſt for ever. The recollections which retrace our infancy are delightful: it is the period of peace, of ingenuous and pure joy and innocence; beſides, we regret youth, we cannot regret infancy.

My firſt care, on reaching the end of my journey, was to inquire after Elbanie: what was my grief on learning that ſhe no longer exiſted! She had died of the ſmall-pox three weeks before our arrival,

leaving but an only daughter ſeven years of age. I was told that Monſieur de M****, her huſband, was inconſolable; I would go and ſee him, and weep with him. I arrived at his houſe at ſix o'clock in the evening, on the very day that his daughter was brought back to him from a neighbouring town, whither he had ſent her during the contagious diſorder with which her mother was afflicted. This child ſaw her father for the firſt time ſince her mother's death. Monſieur de **** had immediately taken her into the church-yard, where were depoſited the remains of Elbanie, and ſhewing her the grave: "If in the ſequel," ſaid he to her, "thou "ſhouldſt experience the temptation of "going aſtray, return hither, and reflect "over the tomb of Elbanie; in retracing "to your mind the image of her whole "life, thou wilt ſtrengthen thyſelf in the "love of thy duties and of virtue."

When

When this anecdote was related to me, a painful retroſpect on my own conduct oppreſſed my heart, and made my tears flow... I ſlept at Monſieur de ****'s; the next morning I roſe with the day, I went to take a walk, and my reverie leading me towards the burying-ground, I entered it. The ſight of Elbanie's grave made me ſtart! This rural monument was as ſimple as the life and manners of her to whoſe memory it was conſecrated: the ſepulchral ſtone, placed on an eminence of turf, appeared to reſt on a baſket of flowers, being ſurrounded and partly covered with anemone, baſerocket, lilies, and hyacinths, contained in a wide border made in wicker, and imitating the ſides of a large baſket, the handle of which, proportioned to its ſize, roſe in an arcade above the grave: ſome climbing flowers, ſuch as white bryony and convolvulus, twiſting themſelves round this handle, formed an elegant arch of garlands and feſtoons. An olive-tree, the

emblem of peace, planted on the ſame turf, ſhaded the baſket; lower down, round the grave, ſome handſome orange-trees, joined to each other by branches of vines in full leaf, compoſed a dazzling circle which was interrupted only by a verdant ſeat, placed between a myrtle and a cypreſs!

I ſat down, weeping, on the turf-ſeat; and fixing my eyes on the grave, the moſt melancholy and bitter reflections preſented themſelves in a crowd to my mind. "Alas!" ſaid I to myſelf, "far from la-"menting her who lived only for virtue, "ought I not to envy a deſtiny ſo pure "and ſo fortunate? .... She knew of life "none but its real bleſſings and its true "pleaſures, thoſe which are afforded by "Nature and produced by ſentiment! "Happily confined to this peaceful ſoli-"tude, her imagination was always ſober "and regular like her life!.... Her "exiſtence was not an empty dream! Cul-

"pable

" pable illuſions diſturbed not its calm,
" and never ſtained its purity! .... In
" ſhort, her career in this world was only
" over the moſt brilliant ſpace; ſhe ſaw
" glide away no other ſeaſon than that,
" ſo ſmiling, ſo delightful when it paſſes
" without ſtorms! She leaves behind her
" the moſt intereſting remembrance; and
" ſhe may well be propoſed as a model
" for her daughter! .... Filial piety will
" daily induce that girl to viſit this grave;
" ſhe will cultivate the flowers around it;
" and here ſhed the tears of gratitude and
" ſenſibility: ſhe will here call to mind
" all the recollections that can be inſpired
" by the ſacred enthuſiaſm of virtue! ....
" Elbanie has not ceaſed to exiſt for *her*
" daughter; from the boſom of the grave
" ſhe will conſtantly ſpeak to her, ſhe will
" ſtill ſerve her as a pattern and a guide!
" .... And I, unfortunate woman that
" I am, unknown to *my* daughter, de-
" prived of her firſt careſſes, I am nothing

" to *her*, when *ſhe* is all to me! If I die,
" Léocadie will never come and weep
" over my grave! .... no exterior ſign
" will announce that ſhe has loſt one who
" brought her into the world! To wear
" mourning for her mother would be a
" diſgrace to herſelf! .... and if the
" name of her culpable mother ſhould
" be diſcovered, people would ſpeak to
" her of her parent only to ſay to her:
" *Were you to become weak like her, you*
" *would be deſpicable and diſhonoured!*"
" .... Here then is the only remembrance
" that I can leave to the object of ſo tender
" an affection! ..... Oh! diſtracting
" thoughts! I cannot make myſelf known
" to my daughter without alarming her
" innocence, without making her bluſh,
" and without debaſing myſelf in her eyes!
" I have occaſion for her indulgence; and
" yet I muſt wiſh that her ſoul may be
" ſufficiently pure not to conceive my
" error, but to find it unpardonable! ....

" The

" The crime of her birth has robbed me
" of all the ſacred rights of a mother;
" I cannot aſpire to her veneration, to her
" confidence; I deſerve not even her
" eſteem; I am neither worthy to be her
" governeſs nor her guide! .... Yes;
" death would be a thouſand times pre-
" ferable to this horrible futurity! ....
" But I muſt live in order to expiate; I
" will ſtop at nothing to extricate myſelf
" from ſuch a ſtate of degradation! O!
" my child! I am determined by the moſt
" ſtriking ſacrifices, to enſure myſelf over
" thy heart thoſe dear rights which nature
" would claim in vain without virtue! ...
" I was compelled to renounce the honour
" of bringing thee up; I was compelled
" to chooſe for thee an irreproachable pre-
" ceptreſs; but I will render myſelf worthy
" of becoming one day thy friend!"

Theſe reflections irrevocably ſtrengthened me in the reſolution of never marrying, and of leading always the moſt ſe-

dentary kind of life; they likewiſe inſpired me with an ardent deſire of acquiring a truly diſtinguiſhed reputation, in order that, in the ſequel, when I ſhould make myſelf known to my daughter, I ſhould have occaſion only to tell her my name to prove to her that I had repaired my fault.

I diſdained frivolous approbation; but, from that moment, I attached the greateſt value to public opinion; I found that, after my going aſtray, it was not ſufficient for me to obtain univerſal eſteem, it was alſo neceſſary for me to acquire admiration; I thought that it would be impoſſible to refuſe it to me, if, adding to the youth and the charms which captivate the world, brilliant accompliſhments, ſound knowledge, and great virtues, I followed with perſeverance a plan of conduct the ſole object of which was to devote myſelf without reſerve to beneficence, literature, and the arts. I imagined, that having

having none of the pretenſions which coquetry inſpires, and conſecrating myſelf to retirement, I could not excite envy; and that my own ſex would, without any difficulty, do me juſtice; that, in ſhort, calumny could neither purſue me nor reach me, if it ſhould dare to attack me.

I was miſtaken; but, before I was undeceived by ſad experience, I for a long time enjoyed the pleaſure of forming projects, and of indulging hopes of the moſt agreeable nature.

On my return to Paris, I applied myſelf to ſtudy with the moſt paſſionate ardour; and I became more unſociable than ever. Madame d'Olbreuſe was in Flanders, and was not to return thence till towards the middle of the winter. I had no other intimate connexion; and, notwithſtanding all the entreaties of my ſiſter-in-law, I would not form any new ones. However, I conſented to be introduced at court, in

order to have *the privilege of being called Madame* *. My preſentation took place the day before the eve of the marriage of the Duke de * * *. I went to all the entertainments which were given on this occaſion; I will own even that I was deſirous of appearing there with ſplendour ſolely becauſe I was determined to go no more to court; it ſeemed to me that to meet with applauſe there was to honour my taſte for ſolitude. I ſpent a week at Verſailles; I returned to Paris towards the end of November, and went the next morning, according to my cuſtom, to walk in the arſenal, a walk extremely ſolitary, which I preferred for that reaſon. The weather was as mild as in the fineſt days of autumn; I ſat down with Agnès on the terrace. In the courſe of a few minutes we perceived a young man of a very handſome perſon coming towards us; he was walking

* *See* the note in vol. ii. page 366.

ſlowly

ſlowly and reading with much attention. When he was oppoſite to us he lifted up his eyes, looked at us ſtedfaſtly, and came back and ſat down on a bench near ours: Finding myſelf embarraſſed at his being ſo cloſe, I roſe up; the ſtranger followed us, and I then reſolved to quit the walk. I returned no more to the arſenal, nor did I again meet this young man. Madame d'Olbreuſe returned towards the end of the month of January. I went to ſee her the very day of her arrival; I had ſcarcely entered her room when the door opened again, and I heard the Marquis *d'Elvas* announced. This name of *d'Elvas* made ſuch an impreſſion on me that I was on the point of fainting; I turned extremely pale, and as I have never worn *rouge*, my emotion was but too viſible; to this agitation ſucceeded ſurpriſe, on recognizing in Henri d'Elvas the unknown young man who had followed me at the arſenal. Ma-

dame

dame d'Olbreuſe introduced him to me; during all that viſit, it was out of my power to reſume my tranquillity; and what prolonged my embarraſſment was, that I ſaw the Marquis d'Elvas was extremely ſtruck by it! .... He might, without ſelf-conceit, miſtake the cauſe of ſo lively an emotion; the more eſpecially as on meeting him a few days after, he remarked that his preſence ſtill occaſioned me an inſurmountable confuſion and abſence of mind. Independently of the painful idea which this name recalled to my memory, I thought, on ſeeing this young man, who was amiable, and diſtinguiſhed by engaging qualities, that, but for the fatal miſtake which had miſled me, I might have loved him lawfully..... and that, in all probability, a ſacred tie would have united us! .... This reflection rendered him but too intereſting in my eyes! .... I came to a reſolution of

going

going no more to Madame d'Olbreuſe's. .... The Marquis d'Elvas, who thought himſelf loved, wrote me the moſt impaſſioned letters; I deſired my brother to anſwer him in ſuch a manner as to deprive him of every hope. He took my refuſals for whim and caprice, and was not diſcouraged. His brother and his ſiſter-in-law alſo imagined that it would not be impoſſible to overcome what they termed my obſtinacy. Their perſecutions on this ſubject appeared to me inconceivable, ſince they knew my ſecret; there was a great deal of coolneſs between us; and, in order to rid myſelf of their importunities, I ſet out for La M** for the firſt time ſince the death of my aunt. I had quitted this place with romantic hopes, now vaniſhed for ever! .... futurity then offered me the moſt agreeable and moſt pleaſing proſpect; it was wholly mine, I was ſtill innocent!

The

The day was beginning to close when I arrived; I did not go into the pleasure-grounds; but I wished to visit the apartment that I had occupied; I there found on the panes of glass the cypher of *Henri d'Elvas* which I had written .... I broke the glass; and my tears flowed .... all the rest of the evening I experienced an unconquerable melancholy; and I passed the whole night without closing my eyes for a moment.

The next morning I was attacked by a fever, and I kept my bed. I got up the following day; being very low-spirited, I sauntered alone into the pleasure-grounds; it was ten o'clock in the morning. I had just recollected that in a part of these grounds which was already called Madame de Rosmond's *garden*, I had the imprudence to write on a plane-tree, on the eve of my departure, the name, at full length, of *Henri d'Elvas*. My intention was to go and efface it; but after having traversed

traverſed two walks; an extreme wearineſs compelled me to ſit down. Like all perſons who have a very lively imagination, I have always had a habit of ſpeaking out loud when alone, eſpecially when my heart and my head are ſtrongly occupied. I fell into a moſt profound reverie; I expreſſed vague regrets; and, weeping, I pronounced, more than once, the fatal name of Henri d'Elvas! .... All on a ſudden I heard an exclamation; I ſtarted, and I ſaw the Marquis d'Elvas at my feet! .... Having been ſtrolling about the grounds for two hours, he had read his name traced on the plane-tree, and had juſt liſtened to me and heard himſelf named! .... He inſpired me only with intereſt; but he thought to a certainty that I ſhared his paſſion. It was impoſſible for me to undeceive him without betraying my ſecret. This ſtrange ſituation produced the moſt embarraſſing ſcene. Being neither able to deny nor to confirm what he had juſt heard,

heard, I looked at him with a ſtupid air, and I durſt not break ſilence. As for him, tranſported with joy, he expreſſed to me, in the moſt impaſſioned terms, his gratitude and happineſs!.... At length I fortunately perceived Agnès at the end of the alley, when I roſe up, conjuring the Marquis to go away, and I went to join Agnès. It may well be ſuppoſed that I was not yet rid of the importunities of a lover who believed himſelf certain of being paſſionately loved; in deſpair, at not being received, he wrote me five or ſix notes in the ſpace of two days; I anſwered him that he was miſtaken in regard to my ſentiments; that I never ſhould ſhare his; and that nothing in the world would ſhake the reſolution which I had taken never to marry. Then the Marquis imagined that I was forced by my brother to hold ſuch language; he returned haſtily to Paris, ſaw my brother, gave him an account of all that had paſſed between us, and obtained

tained his conſent which he received in writing. Perſuaded that he triumphed over the only obſtacles that oppoſed his wiſhes, he came back to La M**, and wrote to me again, at the ſame time ſending me my brother's letter, which contained the moſt formal conſent. What was his ſurpriſe on receiving from me the ſame anſwer! He abſolutely inſiſted on having it repeated from my own lips: to this I conſented. Prepared for this interview, and heartily tired of all his importunities, I was exceſſively calm and cool; I informed him that the name traced on the plane-tree had been written ſome years before, a circumſtance that he might have remarked from the ſize of the letters, had he paid any attention to them; I maintained that it was only a piece of ſport of Madame d'Olbreuſe; I was more embarraſſed to give a natural turn to the confuſion with which his preſence had ſo viſibly inſpired me, and, in ſhort, to the language which had eſcaped me on pronouncing

cing his name when he had liſtened to me. I reſolved to deny, and to attribute to chance or abſence of mind, what I could not explain. He was aſtoniſhed, and confounded; thus I contrived to deprive him of all hope. But, in his heart, reſentment ſucceeded to love. Convinced that I had trifled with him, and that my conduct towards him was as thoughtleſs and artful as it was capricious, he became my irreconcileable enemy *.

* We fear that this is too frequently the caſe with diſappointed lovers; but, making due allowance for the frailty of human nature, we moſt cordially coincide with the great French poet, who, reprobating the baſeneſs of ſuch conduct, ſays:

" *Il eſt affreux d'aller perſécuter*
" *Un jeune cœur que l'on n'a pu dompter.*
" *Si la Maîtreſſe, objet de votre hommage,*
" *Ne peut pour vous des mêmes feux brûler,*
" *Cherchez ailleurs un plus doux eſclavage.*"

For the peace of ſuch of our fair readers as may be cruel or fickle, we ſincerely hope that their lovelorn admirers may follow this wholeſome advice.—*Tranſlator's Note.*

I paſſed

I paſſed upwards of eight ſucceſſive months at La M**. I began my *allegorical garden*, and made ſome alterations in the inſide of the manſion. It was the following winter that I heard of the atrocious calumnies which were ſpread reſpecting me!..... My grief was equal to my aſtoniſhment. My friends had grown cool towards me, becauſe they diſapproved of my mode of life, and becauſe my paſſion for ſtudy did not allow me to give myſelf up entirely to their company. They defended me feebly. The women, who found in my taſtes and occupations a cenſure of their frivolity, hated me, and pulled me to pieces without mercy; I neither gave ſuppers, balls, nor entertainments; I therefore had no partiſans. Calumnies were ſpread, and accredited; and impoſtures the moſt devoid of foundation and even of probability, had all the ſucceſs that envy and malice could poſſibly deſire.

Oh!

Oh! how cruel and tormenting to a feeling ſoul, are the firſt attacks of calumny! When we have had it in our power to flatter ourſelves with having acquired juſt claims to univerſal good-will, how frightful it is to learn that we have been unable to reap any thing but hatred! .... My friends adviſed me to mix more with the world; they aſſured me that the beſt manner of juſtifying myſelf would be to make myſelf known. I had too much pride to follow ſuch advice; injuſtice could only excite my indignation and diſguſt; and, making me paſs ſuddenly from one extreme to another, it inſpired me with the moſt ſovereign contempt for public opinion.

However, an equitable retroſpect on my own conduct led me to make uſeful reflections on the calumnies of which I was the object; I conſidered them as a juſt decree of Providence, which thus puniſhed me by falſehoods, for a great fault totally unknown.

unknown. But being compelled to renounce the ſweet hope of doing honour, by my conduct and actions, to the name of the unfortunate mother of Léocadie, I felt that the only means of one day gaining her eſteem would be to make her the moſt ſplendid and moſt extraordinary ſacrifices; and I promiſed myſelf to give her all my fortune as ſoon as ſhe ſhould have attained the age at which thoughts might be entertained of marrying her. All that I learnt of this child increaſed my affection for her to ſuch a degree, that this ſentiment become my only paſſion, conſoled and indemnified me for every thing. Jacinthe was taken back into the ſervice of the Marchioneſs d'Erneville; ſhe regularly wrote me letters filled with the moſt minute details concerning the occupations, the amuſements, and the pleaſures of Léocadie. She ſent me a lock of her hair; I aſked her for half a page of her writing, and ſomething drawn

drawn by her. Léocadie was then ſix years and a half old. I received with rapture two ſlips of paper, one of which contained only the great letters of the alphabet; and the other, *eyes*, in front and in profile, drawn in red crayons. Jacinthe ſent with this parcel a ſmall worſted ſtocking knit by Léocadie for the poor, and which ſhe had ſtolen in order to make me a preſent of it. Not being able to procure Léocadie's picture, I contrived a thing which at leaſt ſatisfied my imagination. I cauſed ſeveral picture-frames to be made; I placed them in the apartments which I occupied in Paris and at La M**. I covered each of theſe frames with a gauze, and I fancied that theſe veils concealed my daughter's picture. Madame d'Olbreuſe had told me that ſhe knew that Léocadie was extremely like my brother, therefore I could repreſent to myſelf this beloved face: my imagination was ſo ſtruck with this idea, that the ſight of theſe frames

ſtrames gave me a real pleaſure; I contemplated them with tender emotion, I ſaw Léocadie through the gauze, and not unfrequently this contemplation cauſed my tears to flow.

In 17**, a very ſerious accident which I met with on the ſea at Dieppe, in company with Agnès, brought me acquainted with the Viſcount de St. Méran. To him I was indebted for my life; and in him I acquired the moſt faithful and the moſt generous friend. How valuable did this connection become to me on learning that the Viſcount had made ſeveral journies into Burgundy, and that he was intimately acquainted with Madame d'Erneville! He ſpoke to me with enthuſiaſm of Léocadie, who was then eight years of age; but, in anſwering all my queſtions, he informed me of what I had been ignorant of till this period; this is, that the adoption of Léocadie had diſturbed the domeſtic hap-

pineſs of the Marchioneſs, and that ſhe was univerſally calumniated on that account. How painful was my ſurpriſe on hearing that Monſieur d'Erneville did not ſee Léocadie but with a jealous eye! .... and that he thought himſelf indulgent and generous in ſuffering her to be brought up by his wife! ... I flattered myſelf with finding certain means of diſſipating his miſtruſt in that reſpect; and this idea tranquillized me.

The Viſcount conceived for me a ſentiment which deeply afflicted me, becauſe I could not return it; he is ſo virtuous; he inſpired me with an eſteem ſo perfect, and a friendſhip ſo tender, that I reſolved to intruſt him with my ſecret, and I obtained permiſſion for that purpoſe from Madame d'Olbreuſe.

The following year Madame d'Olbreuſe, at my earneſt ſolicitation, made a journey into Burgundy. She aſſured me, on her return, that ſhe had done away all the pre-

poſſeſſions

poſſeſſions againſt the Marchioneſs; that Monſieur d'Erneville did his virtuous wife complete juſtice; and that, in ſhort, Pauline was perfectly happy. St. Méran held to me the ſame language; the Viſcount and Madame d'Olbreuſe ſpoke to me of Léocadie with enthuſiaſm, and brought me back her picture. With what avidity I ſurveyed and examined this portrait ſo dear to my heart! this face ſo ſweet which ſeemed to ſmile on me!..... Madame d'Olbreuſe informed me that Léocadie thought herſelf the Marchioneſs's daughter; but that the ſecret of her birth would be formally revealed to her, and all that I had done for her, on the day when ſhe was to make her firſt communion. I approved all this plan, which was detailed to me, and I promiſed myſelf to conform to it. But I felt an irreſiſtible wiſh to ſee at laſt this adored child, and I concerted the means for doing it with St. Méran and my Agnès, whom I, at this period, made acquainted with my ſecret.

It was decided that I ſhould ſet out towards the end of the month of July, that I ſhould take with me only Agnès and my faithful Raimond, and that I ſhould lodge at the *Port du Fourneau*, in a ſmall houſe belonging to Jacinthe who had inherited it after the death of an old aunt. Raimond went to prepare for me this tenement, and apprize Jacinthe without telling her my name. Raimond, perfectly diſguiſed, and giving himſelf out for a man belonging to the town of Nevers who wiſhed to ſet up a public-houſe at the *Port du Fourneau*, ſaid openly that he meant to purchaſe the houſe; and, under this pretext, he inhabited it for eight or ten days. He made in it a ſort of door, which it was impoſſible to perceive on the outſide; and, in one of the rooms he put up two beds concealed in cloſets. While he was making all theſe preparations, Camille Dercy died of a pleuriſy. This event freed me from a great inquietude. I prevailed on the Count d'Olbreuſe to

loſe no time in writing word of it to the Marquis d'Erneville. A month after, I ſet out for Burgundy; Léocadie was then ten years and a half old. I went firſt to Luzi; in order to eſcape notice, I arrived there in the evening in a public carriage. The next day, I left the town on foot, with Agnès and Raimond, to go to the *Port du Fourneau*; we were all diſguiſed as country-people; we had nine miles to walk; we ſet out at nine o'clock in the evening, and arrived at the *Port du Fourneau* at midnight preciſely. Jacinthe's houſe is very much inſulated; but even had it been in the village we could not have been perceived, every one in the country being faſt aſleep at ſuch an hour. The houſe was filled with proviſions of every ſort, eatables, wine, dried fruits, candles, &c. Jacinthe and St. Méran, who was at Erneville, had forgot nothing of all that could be neceſſary or agreeable to us. What confuſion I felt on finding myſelf ſo

near Erneville caſtle! .... With what delight I thought that I was on the point of ſeeing my dear Léocadie! I reſted myſelf for half an hour, then, guided at a diſtance by Raimond, I entered the cave, where I met St. Méran, who was waiting for me near the rock. St. Méran knelt down before me; he was much agitated, and kept a profound ſilence; he took one of my hands, and I felt his tears flow. ..... I wiſhed to riſe, he ſtopped me; "What are you afraid of?" ſaid he to me; "Ah! do not rob me ſo ſoon of a "few moments of a delightful illuſion.... "Scarcely have I entered this cave, when "on the day appointed, at the hour pre-"ſcribed, I ſee you arrive from Paris.... "Would it not ſeem that love alone could "make ſuch an appointment, that love "alone was capable of not breaking it!... "In the middle of the night, in this "gloomy and loneſome place, Uranie "comes to look for me; I am at her feet;

feet; we are both free, and I adore her."
—"Ah! St. Méran!" exclaimed I, "you
"who know my ſecret and my ſituation,
"can you hold ſuch language to me!....
"The ſacred title of wife is no longer
"calculated for me; but at leaſt I will
"diſcharge all the duties of a mother."—
"Yes, no doubt," interrupted he, "ſa-
"crifice to Léocadie ambition, the world,
"and your fortune; but why ſacrifice
"friendſhip to her?.... Suffer me to
"ſhare your ſolitude; permit me to devote
"my life to you!"—"No, no," rejoined
I; "too generous St. Méran, I do not
"deſerve ſuch an inſtance of devotion!
"For me, the illuſions of love will never
"be revived; that ardent flame, that
"deſtructive fire, in a heart like mine,
"has been extinguiſhed only by being
"exhauſted!.... I repeat it to you, I am
"no longer any thing *but a mother!*....
"It is only by maternal affection that I can
"expiate my weakneſs, and ſtill preſerve

"the hope of happineſs!" At theſe words I roſe up; St. Méran, ſighing, gave me his arm, and we walked out of the cave. I experienced a painful ſenſation on entering the manſion of *Monſieur d'Erneville*, when I reflected that he reſided in it; but the recollection of Léocadie ſoon effaced this impreſſion; regret, remorſe, every thing was forgotten on thinking that I was at length going to ſee that object ſo fondly loved! ..... We traverſed, in profound darkneſs, ſeveral anti-chambers; we had to aſcend a ſmall private ſtair-caſe; then we found ourſelves in a large gallery: St. Méran ſaid to me in a whiſper, "The third door "on this ſide is that of her chamber." I quickened my ſtep, and I perceived this door becauſe it was partly open, and there was a light in the room. Jacinthe, being apprized, was waiting for me..... The Viſcount quitted me, recommending to me not to forget myſelf; I opened the door

door gently, and I entered the room where my daughter in bed had been faſt aſleep for the laſt three hours!.... Her curtains were drawn back; I approached, trembling, and obliged to lean on Jacinthe's arm; at laſt I touched the bed, and I beheld Léocadie.

The inexpreſſible rapture with which the ſight of her inſpired me, was blended with a very bitter ſenſation! I neither could ſpeak to her nor embrace her! I was near her, I ſhed a flood of tears; my heart beat with violence, I ſcarcely breathed; and Léocadie, almoſt in my arms, participated in none of the movements which I felt. Her lovely face expreſſed only calmneſs and tranquillity.... her eyes were cloſed..... and I thought with grief that I ſhould be compelled to quit her without having obtained from her a careſs or even a look!..... But the charm which I found in contemplating her quickly diſſipated theſe gloomy ideas; to

ſee her and to love her was ſufficient for my happineſs! I admired with delight the innocence and ſerenity that were painted on her countenance; it ſeemed to me that, in looking at her, I became pure *! .... In ſhort, I felt that theſe ſublime emotions expiated the culpable delirium of love, and that an affection ſo warm and ſo endearing ennobled my weakneſs, and reſtored me to virtue.

Jacinthe was obliged to apprize me that the dawn of day was approaching. I gave my daughter the moſt tender benedictions, and I tore myſelf from this apart-

* In this ſhort ſentence, the beauty of the thought is expreſſed with ſuch happy ſimplicity as cannot fail to procure Madame de Genlis the approbation of every claſs of readers. It has been ſaid that, next to having virtue ourſelves, the greateſt merit is to diſcern it in others; and, as we are apt to imitate what we admire, it ſeems natural for thoſe who are not depraved, to flatter themſelves that they reſemble the virtuous object of their contemplation.—*Tranſlator's Note.*

ment

ment where I had paſſed the ſweeteſt moments of my life.

St. Méran, whom I found at the foot of the ſtairs, ſcolded me for having ſtaid ſo long. It was day-light. On entering the lime-tree walk I perceived an old maid-ſervant coming towards us. Knowing the ſimplicity of country-people, I told the Viſcount to keep at a diſtance, and I contrived to frighten this woman. I wrapped my head up in my gown, and began running with all my ſpeed. The ſervant-maid, frightened, quickly turned back; I darted into the cave, and regained my houſe, into which I entered by the private door; this gave me the appearance of entering through the wall, a circumſtance that was remarked by a mariner, who was paſſing by at the moment. The next day nothing was talked of but the appearance of the phantom of the cave. I reſolved to keep up this idea; and I eaſily ſucceeded by dreſſing myſelf in white, and by my

aſtoniſhing agility in running. It was not till my ſecond nocturnal viſit that on looking at the objects which ſurrounded Léocadie, I perceived over her bed a charming portrait in crayons, repreſenting a young woman of a bewitching countenance. Jacinthe told me in a whiſper that it was the portrait which moſt reſembled the Marchioneſs. I had divined it..... I viewed this heavenly face with as much confuſion as curioſity. I could not ſtand her look which ſeemed fixed on me; the angelic ſweetneſs and the feeling which were pourtrayed in it, revived at the bottom of my heart painful remorſe. I ſaid to myſelf that, if Pauline knew me, ſhe would not look at me thus!.... In ſhort, I could not, without envy, ſee the portrait of Pauline placed in the receſs for Léocadie's bed, while I, all whoſe rights were uſurped, was nothing to my daughter! while Léocadie would have met me without knowing me!.... However, I returned

turned every night to the caſtle, I never grew tired of contemplating Léocadie aſleep, I drew her picture twice..... One evening ſhe awoke; I concealed myſelf behind her curtain without her perceiving me; I had the happineſs of hearing her voice; ſhe called Jacinthe, telling her that ſhe was thirſty. She drank a glaſs of water, and then ſhe complained of a violent head-ach, and ſhe added: "*But "ſay nothing about it to mamma; it would "make her uneaſy.*"

Oh! how much was my heart oppreſſed when I heard her, for the firſt time, give to another the ſweet title which belonged to me!.... She fell aſleep again, and I ſtole away at an earlier hour than uſual. I met Mademoiſelle du Rocher with a light in her hand. Not being able to avoid her, I extinguiſhed her light, as I ran cloſe by her. The uneaſineſs I felt on account of Léocadie's head-ach prevented me from ſleeping all the reſt of the night. She was

better

better the next morning; but two days after ſhe fell ill. What I then ſuffered is inexpreſſible, for I could not go to ſee her, ſince the Marchioneſs ſat up with her. In the mean time I wandered every night about the cave. St. Méran came every half-hour to bring me intelligence, and at laſt, in the night of the ſixth, he told me, that Léocadie being infinitely better, Pauline would go to bed. I then was abſolutely determined to ſee my daughter, although it was paſt one o'clock in the morning. She was aſleep when I entered the room; I found her fallen away, and exceſſively red in the face; which made me ſuppoſe that ſhe had ſtill a conſiderable degree of fever!.... I knelt down by her bed-ſide, and joined my hands together, at the ſame time ſhedding a flood of tears: "O! my God!" ſaid I in a low, ſobbing voice, "preſerve her to me, were I never "to enjoy the happineſs of being loved "by her! Let her live, let her remain "irre-

"irreproachable and pure, and you will "have done every thing for me!"... In pronouncing theſe words, hurried away by a movement ſtronger than my reaſon, I leant over to my daughter, and I preſſed my lips againſt her burning cheek. At the very inſtant ſhe awoke, holding out her arms to me, and calling out: "*'Tis mam-* "*ma!*" ..... Alas! She was thinking only of Pauline!... Her eyes met mine! that ſweet look was imprinted for ever at the bottom of my heart!.... Jacinthe flew to her; ſhe concealed me, and, moaning, I ſlipped away..... On going out of the room I perceived that the day was beginning to dawn. I covered myſelf with a large white veil which I always wore in theſe nocturnal excurſions. But what was my fright when, half-way down the gallery, I heard the formidable voice of Monſieur d'Erneville, who, naming himſelf at the ſame time, called out to me to ſtop!.... I ran as faſt as I could, and, finding St.

Méran

Méran in the lime-tree walk, I told him by whom I was purſued. He ſtopped Monſieur d'Erneville for a few moments; but he could not prevent him from darting impetuouſly into the cave; I preſently heard him behind me; the exceſs of my emotion threw me into ſuch a trepidation that the rapidity of my flight abſolutely took away my breath. . . . Having reached the rock, I felt that my ſtrength failed me! . . . . It was broad day. Monſieur d'Erneville was now within two yards of me! In this extremity, recollecting all at once that he believed himſelf perfectly certain of Camille's death, there occurred to me a ſtrange thought which extricated me from this urgent danger. . . . . Relying on the power of imagination and remorſe, I aſcended the rock, calling out: "*Stop!*" . . . . At the ſound of my voice the Marquis became motionleſs; I then lifted up my veil, and diſcovered my face, which an extreme paleneſs muſt, no doubt, have

have rendered more ſtriking; for the fatigue and the inconceivable emotion which I experienced, muſt have been painted on my countenance in a frightful manner. The Marquis trembled and ſtaggered..... St. Méran running up, found himſelf near him at that moment, and the Marquis, fainting, fell into his arms..... I came down from the rock; and, caſting my eyes on the fatal author of all my misfortunes whom, after a lapſe of ten years, I ſaw again for the firſt time, I could not reſtrain my tears. "Thou haſt "robbed me of honour and repoſe," ſaid I, looking at him; "thou haſt changed "ſerene, brilliant, and happy days into "days of ſhame and grief; but I forgive "thee!.... O! thou father of Léoca-"die, I cannot hate thee! Mayſt thou "again find happineſs, and may Léocadie "one day contribute to reſtore it to thee!".... At theſe words, I quickly went away, and haſtened to regain my houſe. The

next

next day I learnt, with emotion, that the Marquis was ill. . . . . I remained ſix days longer at Erneville. In this ſpace of time I durſt not return to the caſtle but on the eve of my departure. I again ſaw Léocadie once aſleep; the fever had left her, and ſhe was in a ſtate of convaleſcence. Bathed with tears, I bad her adieu, which was the more painful as ſhe did not hear me! . . . . Twenty times was I tempted to wake her, to take her in my arms, and declare every thing to her; St. Méran, who had accompanied me into her room, repreſented to me that I might occaſion her a fatal ſhock; that this piece of work would make a public ſcene in the caſtle; and that I ſhould loſe all by making myſelf known in this manner to my daughter, without any preparation; that, in ſhort, the plan conceived by Pauline was the only one that could diſpoſe Léocadie to conceive for me all the attachment which ſhe owed me. I yielded. I was not yet familiarized with the

the idea of a public confeſſion; on the contrary, this thought made me tremble, when I reflected that I could not thus diſhonour myſelf in the face of the world, without degrading myſelf in the eyes of Léocadie. The ſacrifice which I make at this day could alone reconcile every thing; but, at that time, I was neither capable of making it, or of meditating on the ſubject.

Riveted to Léocadie's bedſide, I could not bring myſelf to leave it; St. Méran was preſſing me in vain to go away, when Léocadie, ſtill aſleep, ſpoke all at once in a dream. I liſtened with avidity, and I heard her ſay diſtinctly: "*O! my mother! "how I love you!*"—"Alas!" exclaimed I, mournfully, "it is not me ſhe loves!" .... This exclamation, which eſcaped me aloud, making St. Méran fear that the noiſe would awaken Léocadie, he immediately extinguiſhed the night-lamp, and we found ourſelves in profound darkneſs.... In fact, Léocadie awoke with a little

little fright. "Jacinthe," ſaid ſhe, "did "you ſpeak to me?"—"Yes," anſwered Jacinthe, "I got up to light the lamp "again."—"I was alarmed," rejoined Léocadie; "it ſeemed to me that you were "crying; but," continued ſhe, "ſince "you are up, be ſo good as to help me to "put on my night-cap properly; my "fillet is too tight, and hurts me." At theſe words Jacinthe approached. I took her by the arm, and, putting myſelf in her place, I gave her to underſtand that I would adjuſt Leocadie's head-dreſs. "Sit up in your bed," ſaid Jacinthe..... Then Léocadie raiſed herſelf up, ſaying: "Give me your hand!" Oh! how great was my emotion on taking hold of this little hand, and ſqueezing it in mine! "My God! how you tremble!" exclaimed Léocadie. Jacinthe began laughing..... I took Léocadie into my arms, and adjuſted her night-cap, at the ſame time preſſing her to my boſom; afterwards,

wards, Léocadie, throwing both her arms round my neck, embraced me tenderly, ſaying: "*Good night, my dear friend!*" .... I forgot that this careſs was not addreſſed to me, and I received it with tranſport! ..... O! how inexcuſable are the wanderings of love, ſince Nature has implanted in our hearts ſo pure a ſource of delightful emotions! She has thought fit to ſanctify the nobleſt gift of the Creator, ſenſibility *! And we profane

* We think, with Madame de Genlis, that a feeling heart is "the nobleſt gift of the Creator;" and we are ſupported in this opinion by a celebrated *Satiriſt* of antiquity.

——"*molliſſima corda*
"*Humano generi dare ſe natura fatetur,*
"*Quæ lachrymas dedit: hæc noſtra pars optima*
"*ſenſûs.*" JUVENAL, *Sat.* XV. *l.* 131.

Nature's deſign confeſſedly appears;
She meant us tender, when ſhe gave us tears:
Man ſhe diſtinguiſh'd by her fondeſt care;
And this the *nobleſt quality* we ſhare.

Without ſenſibility, indeed, all other good qualities are obſcured, and not unfrequently rendered pernicious.—*Tranſlator's Note.*

this

this heavenly enjoyment, when we ſeparate it from innocence and virtue! .... The happineſs of the moſt lawful love can leave in time only the bitter recollection of a vain enchantment irrevocably deſtroyed; but the ſublime affections in which the ſenſes have no ſhare, are immortal like the ſoul which alone produces them; they neither can grow old nor be exhauſted; we carry them with us to the grave; and, no doubt, they ſurvive us, they are in the number of our virtues! .....

Preſſed in the arms of my daughter, I held her in mine, and I ſhould not have been able to tear myſelf away from her without ending by betraying my ſecret, had not St. Méran, ſlipping ſoftly behind me, ſeized me round the waiſt, and dragged me ſome paces from the bed.... Léocadie called Jacinthe, ſpeaking ſome words which I did not hear; Jacinthe took my place, and told her that ſhe knew not where ſhe had put the tinder-box; but that ſhe

was

was going to ſee in the gallery whether the lamp was ſtill burning, in order to light hers again.... Then Jacinthe opened the door, and the Viſcount, ſtill holding me, carried me out of the room, and to the very end of the gallery. There I was obliged to ſit down a moment; my tears were ſtifling me..... I did not return to Jacinthe's houſe, St. Méran conducted me on foot half way to Paray to a public houſe, where I found Agnès and Raimond with a carriage. I ſet off immediately in order to return to La M**. Notwithſtanding all my precautions, it was publicly known that I had made a ſecret journey; which occaſioned the moſt ſhameful calumnies to be ſpread againſt me; I conſoled myſelf for theſe new acts of injuſtice by almoſt entirely giving up the world. I found ſome ſweet conſolations in the affection of my nephew, in the friendſhip of his worthy tutor, and in the generous attachment of Agnès and

St.

St. Méran. The care of rendering my dependents happy, and the pleaſure of embelliſhing my gardens, completely attached me to La M**. Since I had renounced the project ſo vain and ſo inconſiderate (eſpecially for a woman) of obtaining public admiration, I found in beneficence a delightful charm which procured me happineſs a thouſand times preferable to all the enjoyments of ambition and vanity; for we reliſh this pure felicity only when we do good through ſentiment, and not through oſtentation. I confirmed myſelf in the reſolution of one day bringing together the two objects of my warmeſt affection, Léocadie and Jules. My project from that moment was, as I have ſaid, to ſtrip myſelf entirely of my fortune for them, and to reſerve to myſelf only a ſmall cottage on the eſtate of La M**, ſituated about a mile from the manſion, and which I cauſed to be fitted up with this intention. I was beginning

to

to find again tranquillity and inward peace, the firſt of bleſſings, becauſe they are not only inſeparable from virtue †, but are even derived from it; when the virtuous Abbé de *** was appointed to the biſhopric of Autun. A few months after, I heard, by chance, that the calumnies againſt the Marchioneſs d'Erneville ſtill ſubſiſted; I wrote on this ſubject to the Biſhop of Autun; and, in the ſequel, I learnt, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that the Marquis d'Erneville preſerved unjuſt ſuſpicions againſt his angelic wife, and that, in fact, Pauline was no longer happy! St. Méran, cloſely queſtioned by me, owned that, for fear of afflicting me, he had concealed

† "What nothing earthly gives or can deſtroy,
"The ſoul's calm ſun-ſhine, and the heart-felt joy,
"Is Virtue's prize:"——

This ſaid Pope; this ſays Madame de Genlis; and this, we hope, will not only be ſaid, but felt, by every reader of THE RIVAL MOTHERS.—*Tranſlator.*

from me theſe melancholy particulars. I flattered myſelf that my letters to Léocadie would completely juſtify the Marchioneſs. I had been ſo long accuſtomed to diſguiſe my writing, that I was not at all afraid that the Marquis, eſpecially after a lapſe of thirteen years, would recognize the hand of Léocadie's mother ..... therefore nothing diſturbed the inexpreſſible happineſs which I felt in writing to my daughter, in thinking, in ſhort, that I was going to find a place in her remembrance, and that I ſhould occupy her imagination and her heart! ....

Writing this hiſtory only for Pauline and Léocadie, I ſhall not give an account of events which are known to them, although they are the moſt intereſting of my life, ſuch as my firſt interview with my daughter; our ſecret correſpondence, and her journey to Paris. I ſhall ſay merely that my affection, conſtantly increaſing with time

time and years, became my ſole paſſion and my only exiſtence. No longer living but in Léocadie, I became ſo perfectly detached from myſelf, that I now had not the poſſibility of making her a real ſacrifice, as ſoon as her intereſt, her happineſs, or merely her pleaſure was concerned. I acted naturally; it ſeemed to me that an invincible fatality impelled me; in doing every thing for her, in ſacrificing myſelf, I conducted myſelf without any fixed principle and without any merit; I yielded to inclination alone; and, in order to find egotiſm again, I muſt have had a conteſt with myſelf, and reſiſted all the feelings of my heart.

In the mean time St. Méran had given me his word to deceive me no more reſpecting the ſituation of Madame d'Erneville; and, being conſtantly queſtioned by me, he could not diſſemble to me that my letters by no means produced on Mon-

ſieur d'Erneville's mind the effect that I had promiſed myſelf from them. Since my laſt journey into Burgundy, I had at laſt come to a reſolution of diſcovering myſelf to Monſieur and Madame d'Erneville, at the period of Léocadie's eſtabliſhment, and of devoting myſelf wholly to retirement in an obſcure corner of the eſtate of La M**; but this project juſtified Pauline only in the eyes of her huſband: this was a great deal, no doubt; nevertheleſs it was not ſufficient for the tranquillity of my conſcience, ſince Pauline remained calumniated by her enemies and blackened in the eyes of the public. I had ſome juſt ſcruples, and I at length determined to entruſt them to one of the moſt virtuous and moſt enlightened of men. I told all to the Biſhop of Autun: He was profoundly afflicted as my friend; but he ſpoke to me with the bold truth which I had a right to expect from a cha-

racter

racter like his. He told me that the repentance of a fault was affecting and meritorious only when it inſpired the wiſh and afforded the will of repairing it as far as we had a poſſibility of doing ſo; that, conſequently, I ought to reſtore to the Marchioneſs d'Erneville the reputation which ſhe had loſt through the myſtery of my conduct; that, in ſhort, ſince I was my own miſtreſs, and determined to renounce the world, I ſhould not be happy in a profound retreat but by carrying thither a conſcience diveſted of every ſort of ſcruple and remorſe.

Feeling all the juſtneſs of this deciſion, I ſubmitted to it; and, from that time, I promiſed myſelf to make a public confeſſion, and, in an authentic manner, to acknowledge Léocadie for my daughter, the more eſpecially as I was not ſtopped by the fear that this confeſſion might change Pauline's ſentiments for her huſband, ſince I knew that ſhe, as well as

every one, thought that young Stephen was the fruit of an adulterous amour, and that ſhe belived him to be the ſon of the Marquis d'Erneville.

My daughter's journey to Paris, by filling the meaſure of my affection for her, occaſioned me to make new reflections which at length fixed my deſtiny. Although I had nothing to wiſh for in the attachment which my daughter had for me, I could not help envying the affection, and the ſo well-founded admiration which ſhe manifeſted for Pauline, I thought with pain that it was impoſſible that ſhe could have for me ſuch ſentiments; and, on reflecting coolly on my ſituation, I foreſaw ſome inſupportable humiliations and the moſt tormenting embarraſſments. In fact, ſaid I to myſelf, after a public confeſſion of my weakneſs how ſhall I be able to exiſt, even in the boſom of a cottage with any degree of dignity? My daughter will ſpend near me only part of the ſummer, and

and during this time ſhe will not have it in her power to receive at La M** him whom I ought not, and am determined never, to meet; conſequently the Marchioneſs d'Erneville, who never leaves her huſband, will not venture to come to the country-ſeat of her adopted daughter; and if ſhe came thither alone, what a figure ſhould I make in company with Pauline!.... What a cruel compariſon for me Léocadie might draw between *her two mothers*; the one doing honour to herſelf by ſo ſweet a title which ſhe owes only to beneficence and virtue; the other not being able, without bluſhing, to give way, in the preſence of a ſingle witneſs, to the delights of maternal affection: the one juſtified, irreproachable, triumphant; the other, forced to conceal herſelf and ſinking under the weight of ſhame!.... In ſhort, I ſhall, in my ſolitude, be no more than an irkſome object to my daughter; I ſhall inceſſantly deprive her of the

happineſs of living with her father and her benefactreſs. At the ſame time I ſhall be continually ſeparated from her; ſhe muſt appear at court and in the world; ſhe muſt go to Erneville. What a proſpect for me! Can I hope to find in it a ſhadow of happineſs! .... Erneville and La M** will always be in a ſtate of rivality; and, by a juſt decree of Providence, I can be in future only the unfortunate rival of Pauline! .... No; I muſt make a complete ſacrifice; it is not ſufficient to *repair*, it is neceſſary too that nothing ſhould be wanting to an expiation! ..... In order to put myſelf on a footing with Pauline, I muſt give up every thing! ... give up Léocadie ... O! is it not better to be admired and regretted by her than to debaſe myſelf under her eyes?

From that inſtant I no longer ſaw for myſelf, on earth, but one honourable and peaceful aſylum ... and my mind was irrevocably fixed. ... I ſettled all my affairs

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in conſequence of this intention, I conſidered the ſituation of my dear Agnès, and I ſecured to her a comfortable independence. I then determined to entruſt her with this new ſecret of which ſhe was abſolutely ignorant. My heart was wrung beforehand on thinking that I was going to afflict her dreadfully; yet I reſolved to communicate to her this painful ſecret the day after Léocadie's departure. We were ſtill at St. Mandé, at the Counteſs d'Olbreuſe's; in the evening after ſupper, I took Agnès into my room; and there I opened to her my whole ſoul. She liſtened to me with tender emotion, and with the greateſt calmneſs, without interrupting me. I had expected the moſt painful ſcene; and I own that her tranquillity hurt me as much as it ſurpriſed me. When I had done ſpeaking, Agnès beginning to talk: "Have you fully made up your mind?" ſaid ſhe to me—"Yes," rejoined I, "and "I ſhall conſummate this ſacrifice with

" ſerenity. I ſhall ſtill be able to ſee my " daughter ſometimes; the diſſipation of " the world will quickly conſole my bro- " ther; Jules is too young to preſerve " long a profound grief: reaſon, I ſee, " my dear Agnès, has an abſolute empire " over you; I pity only poor St. Méran; " he will always regret me!" ..... In ſpeaking thus, with a tone full of bitterneſs, the tears ſtood in my eyes. Agnès looked at me ſtedfaſtly with an aſtoniſhed air. " For the firſt time in your life," ſaid ſhe to me, " would you be deficient in juſ- " tice?"—" No, Agnès!" cried I, " I ex- " pected from you more ſenſibility on " ſuch an occaſion, when an eternal ſepara- " tion is in queſtion."—" What! I ſeparate " myſelf from you!" ..... interrupted Agnès: " can you diſpoſe thus of your " liberty without involving mine? Do " you think that friendſhip can have over " me leſs power than deſpair? Did I not " wiſh before to become a nun? And what

" tie

" tie could attach me to the world when " you have irrevocably quitted it? In re- " nouncing it with you I ſhall fear your " regrets, but I, alone near you, wholly " yours, far from having it in my power " to repent, ſhall be a thouſand times " more happy" ... At theſe words, I fell at the feet of Agnès! ..... To endea- vour to combat ſo generous a reſolution, would have been to miſtake Agnès, and alſo to inſult her.... I thought only of expreſſing to her my gratitude. " O! my " Agnès!" exclaimed I, " how much you " have juſt embelliſhed that proſpect " which appeared to me ſo gloomy and " ſo monotonous! I ſhall renounce none " but falſe pleaſures; I ſhall carry with " me a real treaſure, *a ſincere friend!* .... " I ſhall be forgotten by the world; but " I ſhall live with you! .... and if a few " tranſient regrets come to diſturb my re- " poſe, I ſhall be able to depoſit them in " the boſom of friendſhip! A favourite

"hand will wipe away my tears; and "your advice and example will ſupport "my courage!"

In fact, the ſublime attachment of my incomparable friend appeared to me to change my ſituation entirely; to ſuch an attachment was I indebted for recovering the hope of happineſs.

Before I had come to the unſhaken reſolution of burying myſelf in a cloiſter, and of binding myſelf by irrevocable vows, I had viewed only with terror the ſlavery and auſterity of ſuch a way of life; but from the moment when I was determined, even before I had ſpoken to Agnès, I no longer ſaw any thing but the advantages of my ſacrifice; and my converſation with Agnès completely removed from my ſight every thing that could ſtill appear painful.

Fear ever accompanies uncertainty. In this ſtate, the imagination dwells on every frightful idea, and it exaggerates inconveniences and dangers; but when we no

longer

longer heſitate, it, on the contrary, naturally fixes on every object that can afford it comfort and indemnification. This is the reaſon why people of an undecided character, in general, ſhew little courage: they are habitually in the ſituation in which every repugnance and every fear are exalted; we do not repel the fright inſpired by a misfortune which we cannot yet avoid; but when misfortune is inevitable, we wiſh to ſhut our eyes on it, in order that we may not ſee it, or that we may ſee it only by halves. The moſt virtuous reſignation is never entirely diveſted of ſome conſoling illuſions. This is the manner in which I ſucceeded imperceptibly in taking a reſolution of which I ſhall certainly never repent; for it was neither inſpired by deſpair nor a tranſitory enthuſiaſm. It is the fruit of a long deliberation; it is a rational choice; I have weighed and calculated every thing; and I ſee for myſelf no repoſe but at this price.

I cannot conceal myſelf honourably, but under the ſacred veil which I am going to take; I can expiate the ſcandal of the fault of which I have made a public confeſſion, only by ſetting the example of an auſtere penitence: it is my duty to ſhew to my daughter and to the world, how a ſoul born for virtue can repair its wanderings; it is only by ſuch a repentance that I can place myſelf beſide Pauline in Léocadie's heart! it is not poſſible for me to ſee without grief my daughter have a ſecond *mother*, except by voluntarily giving up all my rights over her. I ſhould envy what ſhould be taken away from me; but I ſhall not be jealous of what I ſhall have ſacrificed. In ſhort, religion, the felicity of my daughter, the friendſhip of Agnès, and a quiet conſcience, will inſure the happineſs of my life.

My hiſtory for Pauline and for Léocadie muſt end here. It will be ſufficient for me

me to tell them, that, informed of all their proceedings by St. Méran, Jacinthe, and my nephew, I heard, with trembling, of the project of marriage between my daughter and Maurice; I did not content myself with writing to Léocadie and to her father, I sent to Jacinthe a sealed letter addressed to the Marquis, in which I declared all, with orders to deliver this letter in case it should be decided to terminate the business without delay.

This is the sincere account of my errors, of my remorse and of my sentiments. Pauline has recovered her fame and happiness; the situation of my daughter is secured; I leave to those who have loved me the happy right of esteeming me and of honouring my memory with justice; after having for a long time concealed a great fault, by discovering it, I justify all the sentiments which I assumed; and my friends can neither blush at the attachment

of

of which I was the object; nor pity me while they regret me, if they thoroughly know my ſenſibility, the greatneſs of my ſoul, and the pride of my character.

END OF THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

LETTER L.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Dijon, July 15.

O! MY dear friend, what a dreadful impreſſion both the hiſtory of the Counteſs de Roſmond and the reſolution which ſhe has taken to turn nun, have produced on Albert! His remorſe even amounts to deſpair; with what bitterneſs he weeps over the affecting victim of an error of ſo old a date, and already ſo well expiated! .... what a terrible influence has a ſingle fault over one's whole life! ....

The Counteſs takes the veil on the 25th of this month! .... It is impoſſible that Albert can remain at Dijon on ſuch an occaſion;

occaſion; we are going to make a tour; we ſhall ſet out the day after to-morrow for Switzerland.

The Counteſs, who had reſerved for herſelf ſixty thouſand livres, gives thirty thouſand for her dowry *, and for that of her generous friend; and this is a very conſiderable one for a convent in the country. She gives the other half of the ſum to young Stephen; for ſhe thinks it her duty to ſecure a certain income to the child whom ſhe cauſed to be taken from the foundling-hoſpital.... She had kept ſome valuable trinkets which ſhe has ſent to Paris to her friends. She gives her library to the Viſcount de St. Méran, In all theſe diſtributions, the poor and her ſervants are not forgotten. The faithful Raimond and his wife have a penſion, and will live happy and independent. They

* This is the appellation given to the *entrance* which the Lady Abbeſs receives, for the uſe of the convent, on the admiſſion of a novice.—*Tranſlator.*

are

are determined to ſettle at Dijon, through attachment to their benefactreſs. In ſhort, the Counteſs, taking leave of the world, herſelf executes all the articles of a will dictated by the moſt exact juſtice and the moſt enlightened beneficence. She renounces treaſures of which vanity conſtitutes all the value, and of which the caprice of fortune may rob us; and ſhe reaps the benedictions of the poor, the gratitude and the regrets of friendſhip, and public admiration. Ah! for a ſoul ſuch as hers it is acquiring riches inſtead of relinquiſhing them!

No; I do not think that for a woman of a character ſo proud and naturally ambitious, to bury herſelf thus alive, is a misfortune more cruel than death! .... The praiſes traced on the ſtone of ſepulchres reſtore not warmth to cold aſhes; they are in vain engraved on marble; there, they cannot reſound; there is no echo at the bottom of the grave! .... But it is in a cloiſter

a cloiſter (when we have ſealed the irrevocable engagement of never leaving it) that we can enjoy all our fame; that thundering voice, which envy no longer ſtifles, pierces the walls of the moſt remote monaſtery; and the attentive ear of ſelf-love could diſtinguiſh the ſound, or at leaſt would fancy ſo, in the very middle of a deſert.

Alas! it would be better, no doubt, when we *give up all*, to be, in *every reſpect*, undeceived. This, I confeſs to you, is what I do not ſee in Madame de Roſmond. She has never been able to conſole herſelf for a fault which ranked her in the claſs of women of the common ſtamp; and it muſt be admitted that ſhe was not born for ſuch a claſs. She ſays that ſhe exiſts and acts only for her daughter: yes; in all that concerns not her perſonal fame. She has ſacrificed every thing to Léocadie, with the exception of vanity; it is certainly not a real call that makes her take the veil; it is, as ſhe ſays, a *calculation*,

culation, a rational choice; and, for ſuch motives, can ſhe reſolve to occaſion her daughter and her nephew the moſt dreadful chagrin? Can ſhe take an unfair advantage of the enthuſiaſm of her female friend by accepting this frightful ſacrifice? Can ſhe determine to drive to deſpair that unfortunate St. Méran, the moſt faithful and moſt generous of friends? Can ſhe, without extreme pain, give up to eternal remorſe the father of her daughter, him whom ſhe formerly loved ſo paſſionately? Ah! I agree with you, my dear friend, I have ſome difficulty in forgiving her thoſe bitter tears which ſhe makes my Albert ſhed, and the profound affliction into which this fatal intention will plunge Léocadie! .... Since it is not a call that impels her to this reſpectable profeſſion, why was ſhe not contented with ſtripping herſelf of her fortune, with ſhutting herſelf up for ever in this ſame convent, without binding herſelf by vows? But this courſe

courſe was unattended by renown, it did not diſarm envy; it did not annihilate calumny; it did not inſpire aſtoniſhment; it did not ſubjugate admiration; but how affecting would it have been in my eyes!..

However, I am not guilty of injuſtice towards this equally intereſting and extraordinary woman; ſhe is all alive to feeling; never in any ſoul had ambition ſo much greatneſs; but pride, however well directed, always leaves behind a fatal ſelfiſhneſs. The Counteſs de Roſmond, after having made to maternal love ſo many generous and ſublime ſacrifices, ends by ſacrificing to her fame all that ſhe loves; Whatever ſhe may ſay, ſhe is to be pitied for attaching ſo great a value to an empty vapour; is it poſſible that, with ſo much feeling and judgment, ſhe is not ſenſible that, on earth, there are only two real and deſirable bleſſings, virtue and friendſhip!

Adieu, my friend; our abſence will laſt two months; may I bring back Albert, if

not

not conſoled, at leaſt more calm and quiet! Oh! how much is he puniſhed! and how much does his affliction make me ſuffer! At all times, I could, without a real chagrin, have ſeen in him wanderings which produce ſome ſhadow of happineſs; he appears to me unfaithful only when he frets deeply for another woman; I cannot endure his ſadneſs; I am jealous of the tears which he ſheds; ought they not to ceaſe flowing when it is my hand that wipes them away? And can I, without the moſt lively ſorrow, renounce the dear right of conſoling him? ....

Adieu, I ſend you my itinerary, and I ſhall write to you from all the places where we make any ſtay.

LETTER LI.

From the BARONESS DE VORDAC *to the* COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE.

July 16.

MOST aſſuredly, Madam, I can admire and even love the rival of *Pauline*; I admit that ſhe might ſhine as the only heroine of a fine novel; but ſhe is neither mine nor yours! .... Ah! let us enjoy Pauline's ſuperiority over a character ſo great, and even, in many reſpects, ſo endearing! In Madame de Roſmond is to be found every thing that the moſt noble ambition, every thing that imagination and ſenſibility, which have not always been regulated by religion, can exhibit moſt brilliant and moſt intereſting; in ſhort, *a perfection*

fection purely human, that is to ſay, more dazzling than ſubſtantial; but Pauline's perfection is that of angels, whoſe purity ſhe poſſeſſes. Innocence and piety render her celeſtial and ſublime.

When Madame de Roſinond pretends *to put herſelf on a footing* with Pauline, I ceaſe to admire her; and I become indignant at ſuch blindneſs. The moſt valuable quality that ſhe could poſſibly poſſeſs, would be to acknowledge that the moſt heroic efforts and expiations of repentance cannot raiſe her to the noble rank which belongs only to modeſt, indulgent, perſevering, and ſpotleſs virtue.

Deplorable effect of pride, that can thus miſlead a ſoul ſo energetic, ſo feeling, and a mind ſo ſuperior! Good heaven! to what empty phantom does ſhe ſacrifice her whole future life, and ſtill of ſo great a length? *To public opinion*!... In the firſt moments, ſome will admire this ſacrifice; while others, laughing at it, will call it a folly, and, two

days after, no more will be ſaid of it, no more will be thought of it; and friendſhip alone will preſerve the remembrance of it never to be comforted!.... Oh! what a deception to act only for ſpectators always indifferent and malicious, and ſo frequently unjuſt, envious, and deſtitute of feeling!... You know, Madam, that friendſhip has frequently given me violent fits of miſanthropy: and never had I ſuchſtrong reaſons for having them. You are not ignorant that the old Marchioneſs de T***, and all her tireſome family, ſeeing Pauline at length juſtified in ſo conſpicuous a manner, came, without any invitation, to Erneville-caſtle, in order to be aſſociated, in ſome meaſure, to the fame of a woman whom they ſo unmercifully pulled to pieces in the time of her misfortunes, and whom they now envy more than ever! Pauline received them with her uſual ſweetneſs, and that modeſty, ſo natural and ſo perfect, which muſt gain every heart; but

envy

envy is implacable, and rankles yet at every thing that could annihilate hatred alone!... You doubtleſs think, Madam, that calumny is renounced? By no means. It is admitted that Léocadie is the daughter of Madame de Roſmond and the Marquis; but *Stephen* is the ſon of *Pauline* and *the Duke*.... This is the reaſon why you are ſo fond of this child, and have brought him up. You know that Madame de Roſmond gives him thirty-thouſand livres; inſtead of this, it is aſſerted that *two hundred thouſand livres* have been laid out for him in England.... I ſhould not finiſh if I were to repeat to you all the enormities that are ſpread at T***, at Luzi, and even at Bourbon-Lancy. The Chevalier de Celtas, whatever the worthy Monſieur du Reſnel may have ſaid, is ſtill the ſame, as well as Madame d'Orgeval: ſuch hearts cannot change. Hurried away by a ſight equally unexpected and affect-

ing, they, at the firſt moment, paid that involuntary tribute which vice is compelled to render virtue, when ſhe ſhews herſelf with ſo much luſtre!.... They felt an impreſſion purely phyſical; the ſtriking juſtification of Pauline was to them only a ſcene in a play; they were ſoftened at it in good earneſt, I believe; they wept as they will weep again at the ſublime pieces of Corneille and Racine when theſe are repreſented in a ſuperior ſtyle; and as they would have full as much meanneſs of ſoul, after having admired the clemency of *Auguſtus* and the ſelf-ſacrifice of the *Horatii*, they left Erneville-caſtle with all the vices which they had brought thither. When a perſon has a great celebrity, and conſequently a great many enemies, the moſt ſplendid juſtifications always produce new impoſtures. I know but one kind of courage really unſhaken on all occaſions; it is that of calumniators. Let it be proved to them a thouſand times

that

that they have lied, it will only animate them the more; the rage of their confuſion has no leſs activity than that with which they would be inſpired by the inhuman triumph of their vile ſucceſſes. Equally audacious and daſtardly, and ever perſevering in the intention of injuring and oppreſſing, they attack openly none but the unfortunate who are defenceleſs; but they ſpit, in the dark, their black venom when they dare not, in the open day, whet their daggers. Theſe irreconcileable enemies, joining falſehood to atrocity, are ever repeating that they do not *hate*, that they are incapable of harbouring a *ſentiment ſo painful.* Such has ever been the language of the Chevalier de Celtas; but how can people be the dupe of it when every thing induces him again to talk of Albert and Pauline, in order to ſpeak ill of them indirectly, or in an open manner? Is not this conſtant rage of buſying himſelf about them, for the purpoſe of imputing faults

to them or turning them into ridicule, the moſt unequivocal ſign of a violent hatred? Can indifference have theſe recollections of ſo long ſtanding, and this indefatigable activity? No: when, far from forgetting thoſe whom we have ceaſed to love, we are continually creating opportunities of converſing about them, and we carefully inquire into every thing that concerns them in order to laugh at it, or appear indignant at it, we deteſt them; and we prove this to all thoſe who have integrity and common ſenſe. It is very uſeful to make theſe ſimple reflections; at leaſt they render miſchief-makers ſuſpected. Never will they be reformed; but they ceaſe to be dangerous, when we can take off the awkwardly-hypocritical maſk which they wear, and which but too often deceives the fooliſh, that is to ſay, the multitude. If every perſon, in ſpeaking ill of another, were forced to avow his motives, he would ſcarcely

ſcarcely ever make any impreſſion; for he would ſay: "*It is becauſe I envy, it is be-*
"*cauſe I abhor, that I would wiſh to be*
"*revenged,*" &c. Well, muſt not whoever has eyes ſee clearly all this in the perſevering project of traducing and injuring? Levity leads us to aim a ſtroke of ſatire by the way; but hatred alone is, without intermiſſion, obſtinately bent on the ſame object; and wherever I diſcover the deſire of revenge, can I hope to find juſtice and truth? Am I not ſure, on the contrary, that I ſhall meet with nothing but falſehood and calumny?

Let us conceal theſe melancholy details from Pauline; ſhe has reſumed all the illuſions which formerly made her ſo happy; this is to have found again the brilliant days of her youth; ſhe thinks that Madame d'Orgeval is become feeling and grateful, and that the Chevalier de Celtas has aſſumed integrity and generous ſentiments. Let us allow her to believe theſe

aſtoniſhing metamorphoſes; let us allow her to create for herſelf again an ideal world conformable to her angelic ſoul. Snakes may ſtill hiſs at her; but they are, in ſhort, unable to do her any injury for the future.

Adieu, Madam; I ſhall come to Dijon in the beginning of September with Monſieur du Reſnel; we ſhall there wait Pauline's return; the happineſs of ſeeing you and of talking of her with you, can alone make me bear the impatience which I feel to be again united to that friend ſo tenderly beloved, and who, whatever may happen, will ever be the firſt object of my heart's affections.

LETTER LII.

From the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* COUNTESS DE ROSMOND.

Dijon, July 17.

I SHALL ſet off in two hours.... and I riſe before day-light to write.... and to whom? Great God!.... I cannot reſiſt the movement that urges me.... it is invincible!.... Ah! Madam, forgive me, it is not an inconſiderate preſumption that can inſpire ſuch a ſtep! In daring to addreſs myſelf to you, oh! I ſhould love to proſtrate myſelf in the duſt!.... Can I humble myſelf in raiſing you?.... It is pleaſing to me to annihilate myſelf before you!.... to feel for you all that reſpect and profound veneration can inſpire: this is the only worſhip

that I can pay you.... therefore think only on the motive that animates me!

You have forbid us to inform Counteſs Jules and her huſband of your fatal reſolution; we muſt obey you!.... You will not acquaint them of our misfortune till *the 25th*, after the frightful ceremony!... You will not yet be irrevocably enchained; but you will have made a firſt ſtep, which you will conſider, perhaps, as a ſacred engagement!.... It is not yet too late; you have announced nothing publicly!.... Ah! ought I not to ſay to you every thing that Léocadie would ſay if ſhe were here!.... To ſacrifice yourſelf thus, is it not ſacrificing that adored girl! Do you imagine that an object, whom you fondly love, can, in loſing you, preſerve happineſs?.... All thoſe endearing proofs of an affection ſo warm and ſo conſtant which your daughter received from you, will then have contributed only to her misfortune? That ſublime tenderneſs which

which gave birth in her heart to an attachment ſo impaſſioned, will then cauſe her only tormenting troubles and eternal regrets? .... Ah! conſider this well! After having inſpired ſuch ſentiments, to renounce all, is to deceive, to betray! .... To make yourſelf loved, as people love you, is it not to give yourſelf away? Since there exiſt beings who could not live without you, it is not allowable in you to diſpoſe of your liberty. You belong to Friendſhip, to Nature; are their rights leſs ſacred than thoſe of Hymen? What the law forbids in a wife, ought not feeling to prohibit in the moſt affectionate of mothers! .... Is it you who would quit Léocadie for ever? Have you repreſented to yourſelf her painful aſtoniſhment, her lively and profound grief? Ah! thoſe bitter tears which ſhe would ſhed, you can yet prevent from flowing! .... and if you perſiſt in your frightful intention, who will conſole Léocadie,

when all thoſe whom ſhe loves, will partake of her deſpair, or at leaſt will ſuffer from it? .... O! you, moſt generous of women, reflect on the melancholy ſituation which ſuch a reſolution would prepare for Pauline! .... That Pauline to whom you have made ſo many heroic ſacrifices, would neither be happy through her guilty huſband nor through her adopted child! Her tenderneſs would never triumph over the conſtancy of ſuch a ſorrow! .... Alas! when I believed that you no longer exiſted, I could think only of you, becauſe I could give myſelf up without remorſe to the melancholy pleaſure of employing my mind about you! .... How ſhall I be able for an inſtant to turn away my eyes from that terrible grave into which you will have deſcended alive, and into which I ſhall have plunged you? What will become of me on ſeeing you there in the prime of your life, and with all your charms? ... If that image, which

will

will haunt me wherever I go, was to be my only penance, I ſhould be under the neceſſity of ſubmitting perhaps, or at leaſt of acknowledging, the equity of this terrible chaſtiſement..... But Pauline would alſo be the victim of it!.... For I ſhould no longer have but one idea, I ſhould no longer ſee but one diſtracted and dangerous object!.... My imagination would follow you; it would profane your retreat by inceſſantly bewildering itſelf there to ſeek for you, by daring to lift up the fatal veil that would conceal you from my ſight!.... I ſhould again find my crime with my puniſhment; I ſhould attach myſelf to it again with the fury of deſpair; yes, I ſhould feel all the rage of a mad love, revived by remorſe and by a heart-rending pity..... Oh! tear me not from duties the moſt ſacred; ſuffer me to live for Pauline and for Léocadie! I can preſerve my ſentiments and my reaſon only by knowing that you are happy and calm..... Save me from the horror

horror of betraying nature, and failing in gratitude and friendſhip!

Ah! if the painful recollection of her whom I thought a courtezan, had ſo fatal an influence over my deſtiny, what will then be the terrible effect of the regrets excited by the real object!.... by that object worthy of the homages and admiration of the whole world!.... Shall I not be ſtill ſufficiently puniſhed? Can I ever again become happy?.... By making yourſelf known, by ſhewing yourſelf without diſguiſe, are you not revenged?.... What ſhall I do with all the ſentiments with which you have filled my ſoul!..... I can keep them to myſelf and conceal them; but to *moderate* them! ah! what a torment!

Alas! what am I doing in ſpeaking to you of myſelf.... I cannot hope to ſoften you, I know; I muſt ſigh eternally, and you muſt never hear me!.... but liſten to Léocadie, 'tis ſhe who ſpeaks to you

by

by my mouth!... O! my daughter!.... O! my Léocadie, come back and ſoften that adored mother!..... O! thou who canſt embrace her knees, come back!.... Who could reſiſt thy ſighs, thy tears, thy grief?.... By reſuming in that maternal heart all the rights which belong to thee, thou wouldſt reſtore to life thy unfortunate father!

LETTER LIII.

From the COUNTESS DE ROSMOND *to the* MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

Convent of the Urſulines, at Dijon, July 18.

WHAT! will you, for ever, be the enemy of my repoſe and of my reputation?.... Had I not read your letter with the indulgence which we owe to the firſt

firſt movements inſpired by a feeling heart and a hot head, I would not anſwer you; for I ſhould have ceaſed to eſteem you..... and I ſhall tell you, without any reſerve, that this to me would be a dreadful misfortune!..... I ſtand in need of your virtues; they cannot juſtify me; but they will ennoble my fault!..... Why do you talk to me of remorſe, when I am peaceable, when I have expiated every thing! ..... I free you from repentance!..... If I have repaired my diſhonour, your remorſe is no longer any thing but folly and injuſtice; it debaſes, it tarniſhes me! ..... If you admire me, pity me no more..... Know your real duties towards me, and learn to perform them. Honour, by your actions and your character, the imprudent and unfortunate choice of my youth, and be an affectionate father!..... Had I been Léocadie's *only mother*, I would not have wiſhed to live but for her; but in the ſituation I am in, I diſ-

poſe

poſe of myſelf without forſaking her; I leave her a mother, and I ſhall ſee her oftener than if I remained concealed in a cottage three hundred miles from Erneville!....

It is true that human motives have no ſmall ſhare in the courſe that I take; but religion alſo contributes to determine me; and, doubt it not, it will completely purify and perfect the work of repentance and reaſon. Do you think that this too lively imagination which decided my deſtiny, can only bewilder me? Ah! I will henceforth make it conducive to my happineſs!.... Far from leading me aſtray, by exalting itſelf, it will guide me towards ſupreme wiſdom!.... Happy enthuſiaſm which increaſes at the approach of old age and death, and is ſtrengthened by the loſs of every illuſion!.... This is the ſentiment of which my ſoul has need, and the only one that can fill it! Adieu! diſpel all

all inquietude which inſults me; diſturb not my triumph by an injurious compaſſion; when I am devoting myſelf entirely to virtue, deign to believe that I am coming to myſelf; that I am following my real call, and be quiet reſpecting my ſituation.

May the pureſt and moſt perfect of women, may Pauline be happy through you and Léocadie; this is the warmeſt wiſh of my heart! ....

LETTER LIV.

The MARQUIS's *Anſwer.*

Beſançon, July 21.

My ſoul is racked ..... but when you enjoin me to perform my duties, you render

render them ſtill dearer to me! .... The object the moſt glorious to me is to obey you?.... What ſhall I ſay to you, alas! .... yes, no doubt, it is not you that ought to be pitied! but it is you who owe us at leaſt your compaſſion!....

Oh! how vain and frivolous appears to me this world which you are quitting! .... how puerile ſeem to me thoſe pleaſures which you are irrevocably renouncing! All the illuſions which you reject vaniſh from my eyes! .... The idea that you are going to diſappear for ever confounds my imagination like that of eternity!.... This fatal project overwhelms me conſtantly with the ſame grief; but you are ſo ſuperior to every thing which you abandon, that I am no longer ſtruck at the greatneſs of the ſacrifice!... Oh! could admiration ſoften grief!....

I ſhall ſuffer till my laſt breath .... but your wiſhes and your will are for me inviolable

inviolable laws!.... Ah! how dear is virtue become to me! I cannot henceforth ſeparate its image from that of all I love!.... To adore it with tranſport, to follow it with perſeverance, is to honour worthily, to cheriſh Uranie, Pauline, and Léocadie!.... Yes, I am determined to ſhare the ſublime enthuſiaſm with which you are inſpired; I am determined to raiſe myſelf up to you! Here then is an engagement into which I can enter with you! Here then is a powerful tie which will unite us to the grave!....

Oh! you ſhall, till my death, be preſent in my thoughts; receive this ſolemn oath! How ſacred it is to me! Not to betray it, will be to remain faithful!

LETTER LV.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS.

Neufchatel, July 25.

WHAT a day, my friend, is this! .... Ah! what a painful one has it been to me .... Albert got up before it was light, and went out quite alone, in order to wander about the banks of the lake! .... Alas! I durſt not go and join him; but my imagination repreſented to me all that he felt; I ſighed, I wept, I ſuffered with him! ....

I was alſo ſoftened in regard to the unfortunate victim! ... My dear friend, we have been too ſevere towards her in condemning this generous and great ſacrifice! .... Who knows what is paſſing in her

her heart! who knows whether time and maternal affection could triumph over the paſſion which occaſioned her misfortune! Oh! if that ſoul, ſo energetic and ſo feeling, had preſerved that fatal inclination! What could ſhe do more prudent and more virtuous than to take refuge in the boſom of Religion! .... How this idea affects me!.... How I pity this unfortunate woman ſo worthy of a better fate! ..... Ah! why did not Providence, more propitious to the ſecret wiſhes of Albert, cauſe me to be born his ſiſter, and give him for a wife the mother of Léocadie? We ſhould all be happy!....

Adieu, my dear and affectionate friend! With what pleaſure ſhall I return towards you on reflecting that you will paſs the whole year of your widowhood at Erneville, and that afterwards brought near me for ever, you will be ſettled at *Gilly*, at that place which friendſhip has long rendered

dered ſo dear to us, and which ſhe will completely conſecrate to us by fixing you there! Tell our friend that my firſt letter will be to him.

LETTER LVI.

From the COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Dijon, July 26.

IT is all over; ſhe has taken the veil; I will, as you deſire, my dear Baroneſs, give you all the particulars that I could collect from Madame de V****, who ſaw the whole.

The ceremony took place yeſterday at noon. There were preſent as many people as the church (which is ſpacious) could contain. The Counteſs de Roſmond, ſuperbly dreſſed, was of a dazzling beauty.

She

She had a noble and modeſt countenance; a feeling look, but at the ſame time calm and collected. In her, there was neither remarked trouble, melancholy, nor the appearance of the ſlighteſt emotion. Her intereſting friend, Mademoiſelle de Cernin, who is called Agnès, appeared to think only of her; ſhe was ſeen to turn pale ſeveral times on looking at the Counteſs! .... She ſeemed to forget her own ſacrifice; ſhe ſaw only that of her friend! ....

When the two female friends, ſtripped of their ornaments, re-appeared in order to receive the veil which was given them by the Biſhop of Autun, they held each other by the hand; Agnès walked with an unſteady ſtep; the Counteſs advanced towards the grate with a majeſtic aſſurance; but when ſhe ſaw the veil placed on the head of Agnès, ſhe was moved; and her tears flowed for the firſt time .... while, on the contrary, Agnès appeared to

be reanimated at the moment when ſhe conſecrated herſelf to friendſhip as well as to religion! The Counteſs, quickly reſuming the deportment of ſelf-poſſeſſion and ſerenity, went and proſtrated herſelf with Agnès in the middle of the choir; then a ſingle pall was ſpread over theſe two friends, whom the ſame oath unites for ever in the ſame cloiſter, and whoſe remains will, undoubtedly, one day be depoſited in the ſame grave.

The Biſhop of Autun pronounced the moſt pathetic diſcourſe. The text was well choſen and affecting; it was as follows:

"Shall they fall, and not ariſe? Shall "they turn away, and not return?" *Jeremiah*, chap. viii. v. 4.

"I have put off the clothing of peace, "and put upon me the ſackcloth of my "prayer: I will cry unto the Everlaſting "in my days." *Baruch*, chap. iv. v. 20.

An expreſs was ſent off to Count and Counteſs Jules, who, no doubt, will haſten hither in order to leave nothing unattempted to ſnatch *the fair penitent* from her cloiſter; but all their efforts will certainly be fruitleſs.

Adieu, my dear Baroneſs; write to me as often as you can; do I not ſtand in need of conſolation when all my children are ſo far from me? And are not the proofs of your friendſhip the ſweeteſt that I can receive?

THE END.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ERRORS OF THE PRESS.

VOL. I.

Page 46. line 18. *for* to ſee her houſe *read* to ſee her

VOL. II.

68. line 20. *for* I have certainty *read* I have the certainty
131. — 21. *for* clifts *read* clefts
172. — 22. *for* being to fit *read* being made to fit
176. — 21. *for* Madame *read* Monſieur
221. — 2 *for* diſpleaſed *read* diſpleaſes
327. — 5. *for* could alone grant *read* could grant

VOL. III.

13. line 3. *for* Baroneſs *read* Baron
25. — 5. *for* air *read* hair
29. — 21. *for* communicate *read* communicative
32. — 2. *for* D jon *read* Dieppe
106. — 20. *for* want of the knowledge *read* want of knowledge
144. — 4. *for* oſtentations *read* oſtentation
245. — 1. (and wherever it is repeated) *for* Mademoiſelles *read* Meſdemoiſelles
324. — 5. *for* impaſſable *read* impaſſible
374. — 12. *for* my *read* may

VOL. IV.

214. line 22. *for* diſêmble *read* diſſemble

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